

FANTASYNOPSIS

THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASTIC FILMS & VISCERAL VIDEOS

5

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AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON
WOLFEN
WEREWOLVES ON THE SCREEN

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Plus:

SAPPHIRE & STEEL

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REVIEWS

WEREWOLF
SPECIAL

FANTASYNOOPSIS number five

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This issue is dedicated to Anthony Perkins, Klaus Kinski, David Gale, Jack Arnold, Tomisaburo Wakayama, Neville Brand, William M. Gaines and Denholm Elliott.



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*Front Cover - An American Werewolf In London
Back Cover - Mark Of The Devil*

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**SHORT
CIRCUIT** PG

Life is not a malfunction.

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Olaf Ittenbach's very gory THE BURNING MOON

FANTASYNOOPSIS #5

Editorial

Number 5 is alive! Welcome to the very latest FANTASYNOPSIS - can it really be that long since we last met?

No apologies are made for the lateness of this issue, after all I've always stated that it's "published on an irregular basis" and I do like to cram the pages with as much info as I can.

I've tried to keep the quality of the articles and interviews up to our usual high standard and I hope that you'll enjoy reading what I have lined up for you within these pages. As usual we go *in-depth* on a couple of films and, as this issue boasts a lycanthropic theme, two modern day examples of the genre are put under the FS microscope, John Landis' quite superb **AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON** and the border-line werewolf inclusion **WOLFEN**, which just gets better and better with each viewing. This issue's interview subjects have provided some great stories and I hope that you find them as interesting as I did (If not, let me know via The Chowder Society).

Some of you may notice that I've dropped a couple of the 'regular' features, the short story and the X-word, but I have re-introduced the TV Classics section and Mark Merton's study of the cult series **SAPPHIRE AND STEEL** must be one of the most detailed and informative pieces on the show so far. 1992 has been and gone and to be honest it wasn't really a classic year for the genre with the two eagerly awaited outings from Mssrs. Lynch and Cronenberg (**TWIN PEAKS: FIRE WALK WITH ME** and **NAKED LUNCH**), proving to be *major* disappointments (along with the third **ALIEN** film) but this was made up for with two very special re-issues: Cameron's **ALIENS - THE SPECIAL EDITION** and **BLADE RUNNER: THE DIRECTOR'S CUT**. Let's just hope that '93 can provide us with plenty of memorable new movies and, to keep with the trend, more "director's cut special versions" - how about Kubrick's **A CLOCKWORK ORANGE**, to celebrate the 21st Anniversary of its UK opening, right, right, right?!

One other thing that proved welcome in '92 was that video companies at last latched on to the idea that collectors want to see (and own) letterbox versions of their favourite films. Happily, it does seem to have caught on with the public but it's just a shame that films aren't released simultaneously in the varying screen ratio's as a lot of us end up buying two (or even three!) tapes of the same film!

1992 will also be remembered, but best forgotten, for the ridiculous revival of the nasties debate with all the crazy police raids, etc. - when will they ever learn? Unfortunately, we can only live in hope.

I simply can't let this editorial go by without mentioning **THE BURNING MOON**, a brilliant new film by the young German director Olaf Ittenbach. Filmed for just £18,000 Ittenbach has created what he describes as "the goriest horror movie ever" - let me assure you right here, he's not far wrong, **THE BURNING MOON** has blood by the bucketful and top-notch effects to match (check out the still). Keep an eye and ear out for it as an English sub-titled version is coming out shortly.

Any of you ever heard of 'The Ghost Story Society'? Well, they have requested us to plug the petition they are organising in the hope of getting repeat screenings, or video releases of the classic series of Christmas ghost stories first shown by the BBC from 1971 to 1978. Anyone interested can get petition forms (and more info) from Robin Davies, 17 Millstream Close, Hertford, SG14 1LJ.

On that note I'll sign off and leave you to plough through #5 at your leisure - read it and enjoy. Be seeing you in Number Six!

Paul

Paul J. Brown
Editor - February 1993



Dear Paul

I was staggered that you appeared to use every word I said to you in the FANTASYNOPSIS you sent me. I'm embarrassed that I rated nine pages whereas Argento only got two! Nevertheless, I thought it made very interesting reading. But then I would, wouldn't I?

David McGillivray, London.

Glad you liked it, David. The staggering thing is that you don't fully appreciate how important you are to the British horror genre - thanks for doing what you do! Ed.

Dear Paul

Many thanks for the latest issue, it seems ages since the Argento event - FANTASYNOPSIS just gets better, the 'new' look is excellent and makes me ever so slightly envious, still, **SUBTERRENE** sells okay even if it can't match other zines production values. When all is said and done we all do it for the love and not the cash, so anybody who gets a mag out is at least trying to add to our beloved genre.

Onto some specific comments: Glyn Williams must write/subscribe to every mag around. Glad to see someone's got a contribution out of him as he's always seemed extremely knowledgeable and a genuine fan. Bobbie Bresee certainly seems a hell of a lot more intelligent than most scream queens, Linnea Quigley for instance. Good questions too. Didn't agree with the **LIFEFORCE** piece, always thought it was Hooper's worst misfire and showcased some of the worst acting and scripting ever. Hooper's talents seem to decrease in direct proportion to the size of the films budget.

The Argento interview was good - someone who asked him some decent questions, at last! I'd love to get the chance to ask Ruggero Deodato the same question about **CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST** as you did with **PROFONDO ROSSO**. I live in hope of seeing those two perennially missing scenes. Always enjoyed Langella in **DRACULA**, very sensual movie, recently saw a stage version, talk about wince!

Now for the only real criticism, some of the reviews in the back seem far too lenient on the US straight to video dreck. Still, each to their own.

Anthony Caswood, Pudsey, Leeds.

Thanks for the comments - LIFEFORCE is one of those love/hate movies that seems to have a bigger following than I initially thought. Anthony edits SUBTERRENE which I haven't seen for some time. Ed.

If you've got something to say about FANTASYNOPSIS or just want to talk about the genre, then spill your guts to The Chowder Society, 1 Bascraft Way, Godmanchester, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE18 8EG, England.

Dear Paul Brown

Many thanks for the fourth issue of FANTASYNOPSIS.

First let me tell you that I greatly enjoyed the contents of your excellent magazine which certainly shows the hard work you and your associates have put into it.

Also I liked the interview very much and thought it turned out well.

My only criticism is that I cannot understand why you would go to all the trouble to change my correct spelling of Gene Autry to the incorrect Autrey every time his name is mentioned! Why on earth would anyone do this?

Thank again and with all best wishes.

Alex Gordon, Los Angeles, USA.

Oops! What can I say? I can only apologise and I have since written it out a hundred times and I'll try not to do it again. Ed. Gene Autry, Gene Autry, Gene Autry, Gene Autry...

Hello Paul

Thank you for the fourth copy of FANTASYNOPSIS which I found to be very professionally produced and I was very impressed overall. Of what I liked the most included the Bobbie Bresee interview, the **LIFEFORCE** article, a film which I'm also very fond of myself. So what if it was a big budget version of, say, **QUATERMASS AND THE PIT**, or SF movies of the 1950's and 60's, I happened to enjoy those kind of movies and grew up watching many on TV. So it was great to see this kind of movie on the cinema screen. I'd never heard of David McGillivray before although I was aware of some Pete Walker movies. Anyway, I found the interview very interesting indeed, and I can still remember seeing **SCHIZO** and **SATAN'S SLAVE** way back in the late 1970's, and I even saw **TERROR** on a double-bill with one of those Italian **BRONX WARRIOR** movies. I remember enjoying those horror movies even though at the time I wasn't aware of who had written them. The reason I was interested in the **DRACULA** coverage was that BBC Radio 4 was in the process of adapting Bram Stoker's horror classic. I saw the film years ago and haven't seen it since, so it was good to see an article on it. I enjoyed the review section, while having a number of films I'd seen it was good to see someone else's opinion on said movies as well as reviewing some films that I haven't seen and will still be able to track down on video. Thanks again - good luck on your next issue of FANTASYNOPSIS, and if it's as good as issue four, I'll be looking forward to purchasing it from you.

Howard T. Pell, Keighley, West Yorkshire.

Dear FANTASYNOPSIS Crew

We read the review of **DOCTOR WHO AND THE TALONS OF WENG-CHIANG** and saw the plea for info about why it was rated PG and why it was cut by ten seconds.

Well, the BBFC are to blame, they looked at episode one and found great offence at the scene where big Tom Baker gets kung-fu'ed by a gang of stock Victorian Chinese villains and demanded *all* the fancy kicks be cut (you can tell how much is cut by the bizarre edit and slo-mo film speed used on the BBC Video). Also, the other cut was a scene where

someone pushes a newspaper under a door, knocks out the key, catches it on the paper and pulls it back under!

Incidentally, the BBC **BLAKE'S SEVEN** video release suffered a similar fate with its second episode because of a kung-fu fighting sequence... it's a funny old world...

Phil T., Asst. Manager, Forbidden Planet, Nottingham.

Thanks Phil, for putting the record straight. The crazy world of the BBFC just gets weirder and weirder! Ed.

Dear Paul

Thanks for issue four of **FANTASYNOPSIS**, yet again, another very enjoyable read, even though my girlfriend wouldn't let me display the **HOUSE OF WHIPCORD** poster (I liked it though!).

I must moan about this perplexing admiration that people have for Dario Argento, I've yet to see a movie of his that would get in my Top 50, come to think of it, Top 100! **OPERA** was all flash and no substance, whilst the climax of his 'Black Cat' section of **TWO EVIL EYES** was just too OTT for words. Enough of this bitchin' and on to more pleasant matters... **TERMINATOR 2** was indeed the event of the last few years, I've seen it both on video and at the cinema and it lost none of its impact - an action masterpiece!! **SILENCE OF THE LAMBS** I've mixed opinions on, on the one hand, Anthony Hopkins was inspired as Hannibal Lector - but when was the last time a mass-murderer was caged in a scene straight out of a 60's Hammer flick, I half expected Oliver Reed to be in the opposite cell! (Plus, the best line in the book was excluded from the film, when Clarice Starling asks Lector why Buffalo Bill is flaying his victims, Lector replies, "He wants to make a vest with tits on!").

Finally, a quick word on Peter Benassi's 'review' of **THE EXORCIST III**, Peter says that "Blatty was far more interested in what his protagonists have to say to each other... rather than visceral and violent visuals" - all I can say is for goodness sake stick to your **ELM STREET** videos if you want SFX - leave the intelligent horror film (a rarity in itself!) to the more discerning viewer!

Congrats on your **SAMHAIN** 'Award' - you certainly got my vote (with the ever excellent **IMAGINATOR** coming in second).

Looking forward to issue five, please don't make us wait too long Paul - I appreciate it's hard work (I once produced a music fanzine - but due to the time it took, I sadly only produced one issue, back in 1988).

You want ideas for a film retrospective? How about... **THE EVIL DEAD & EVIL DEAD II**, **THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE**, **THE EXORCIST**, **MAD MAX & MAD MAX 2**, **BLOOD SIMPLE**, **CRIMEWAVE**...

Rob Williams, Cleveland.

*I think a lot of fans got a bit fed up with the sheer amount of exposure Dario Argento had in the genre press of last year - but it was still great to talk to him! Personally speaking, I found **THE EXORCIST III** one of the scariest experiences I've ever had - and loved every minute of it! A few good ideas there for future retrospectives, but as far as **THE EXORCIST** goes, I'd love to cover it, but, I don't think we could match up to the articles found in **VIDEO WATCHDOG**, **THE DARK SIDE** and **FANGORIA**, etc. Check out their coverage if you haven't already done so. Ed.*

Dear Paul

I read about your interest in Colin Wilson in **FANTASYNOPSIS 4**, so I thought I'd drop you a line. I'm a professional writer (freelance and staff on mags such as **SOUNDS**, **NME**, **STARLOG**, **PENTHOUSE**, **RAPID EYE**, **WHITE STUFF** and **VIDEO WORLD**; books here and in the USA on everything from Aleister Crowley to Meat Loaf) and a long-time fan and friend of Colin Wilson - although he lives a somewhat secluded life due to work rate and unwanted "loopy" fans, he has always been great to me and even wrote an intro to my **ALEISTER CROWLEY SCRAPBOOK**.

Anyway - re. **LIFEFORCE**: the rights were sold by

Wilson's agent to someone who then re-sold them at a profit to the movie-makers. CW only found out that Tobe Hooper was making the film when I heard about it and wrote to him! Though he was given the cold-shoulder during the making of the flick, Wilson wanted the movie to be a hit - and not just so he'd get royalties due if it went into profit; there was the possibility of a sequel to the **SPACE VAMPIRES** source novel (to be penned by A.E. Van Vogt and CW) if the picture took off. Interestingly enough, CW was informed by a friend that the film (which he hated) originally had a lot more outer-space footage at the start, and that a full-length **LIFEFORCE** incorporating this material was shown in Japan! Also, a friend of CW's named Alex Lytle has written a script of **MIND PARASITES**, though nothing ever came of it.

More trivia - did you know that Colin did an uncredited re-write on **FLASH GORDON**, some of which ended up in the finished version? For instance, the "bore-

worms" torture was his idea - though they were meant to trigger unbearable sexual ecstasy rather than normal pain. Dino De Laurentiis also asked CW to do a sequel to **ORCA**: **THE KILLER WHALE**, though he declined saying: "How can I get my philosophy into this? All a killer whale's going to do is kill people!" (or words to that effect!)

Those keen on CW might want to check out the recent Borgo Press bibliography of CW's work. Although not an academic work (no listing of bindings, page size, etc.) it *does* list (nearly) every book, pamphlet, article, interview, etc.!

I enjoyed the piece on the '79 **DRACULA** - saw it in Mann's Chinese on Hollywood Blvd. when it came out - my girlfriend at the time found it erotic!

Sandy Robertson, London.

*Thanks for all that interesting CW info! Anyone out there ever seen this Japanese version of **LIFEFORCE**? Ed.*



Ray Bradbury

Writer Ray Bradbury has been contributing to the SF genre since 1939, when he published his very own fanzine entitled 'Futura Fantasia', and has gone on to produce classic titles like **THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES**, **THE ILLUSTRATED MAN**, **FAHRENHEIT 451** and **SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES**. He has also lent his considerable and prolific talents to the world of film and television and his movies include **THE BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS** and **IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE** as well as adaptations of the books already mentioned. Recently Mr. Bradbury took time out to give **FANTASYNOPSIS** his five favourite fantasy films...

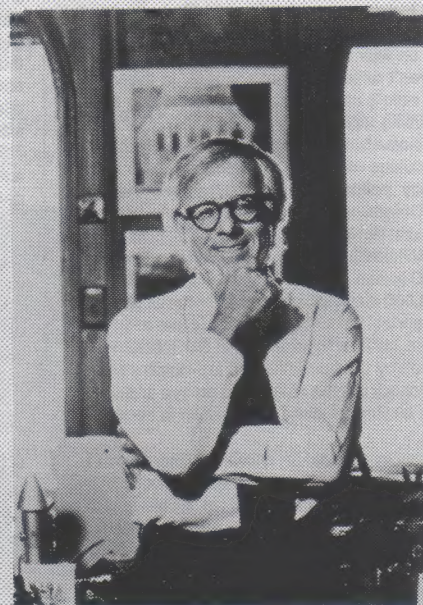
1. THE LOST WORLD (1925) - Directed by Harry O. Hoyt.
"Because it introduced me to dinosaurs at age 6"

2. THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA (1925) - Directed by Rupert Julian.
"Because it brought Chaney into full-frightening focus in my life, after seeing him three years earlier in **HUNCHBACK**..."

3. KING KONG (1933) - Directed by Ernest B. Schoedsack.
"Because it gave me bigger and better dinosaurs with a perfect action screenplay"

4. THE HAUNTING (1963) - Directed by Robert Wise.
"Because it is the most literate, beautiful, subtle 'radio' drama (the *sounds* scare) ever filmed"

5. FANTASIA (1940) - Directed by Samuel Armstrong, James Algar, Bill Roberts, Paul Satterfield, Hamilton Luske, Jim Handley, Ford Beebe.
"No comment needed. I was devastated the night I first saw it, aged 20"



A recent publicity shot of Ray Bradbury

Ray Bradbury

ON THE FARM

Jackie D. Broad, REVENGE OF BILLY THE KID's Ma MacDonald, Talks Dirty Over The Phone To Paul J. Brown

Paul J. Brown: First of all I'd like to congratulate you on your performance in *REVENGE OF BILLY THE KID*.

Jackie D. Broad: Oh, thank you very much!

How did you get to be involved with the project?

Through basic auditions, etc.... Originally, they thought I was too young for the part, then they were going to use prosthetics, but they couldn't afford them with the low budget... they were looking for someone about fifty or sixty, I was twenty-eight at the time, I'm thirty now... I went back a few times and then they, and only they know why, decided to use me.

What did you do to prepare yourself for the role - did you do the whole De Niro bit and actually live as Ma MacDonald for a few weeks?

Not at all, I hate all that crap... I knew vaguely what they wanted, but I wasn't positive, and when we went along everyone had to say what they felt about her... I like swearing a lot, so a third of Gretta is me anyway! I wouldn't call the toilet scene and things like that me, but certain other bits are me.

Did you enjoy grossing-out for the part?

Oh yeah... I'm a fat actress anyway... nine times out of ten the parts I get are not the Juliet parts, you know, the pretty-little-missy-parts, I don't want them anyway. I like the Gretta parts, the obscene-type, people you love to hate... I like those, you know, something you can get your teeth into. Gretta was the perfect opportunity really.

Was Michael Balfour good fun to work with?

Yeah, he was... the whole thing was fun and Michael was very good to work with... we all had a good laugh. It's like anything, you do your job but it also helps if you get on and, as cliched as it sounds, we did... we all had a good time... it was good fun.

How long did the filming take?

My actual bit was done over three weeks, on and off... two weeks down there then we were called back for some little bits... I think the whole thing took about eight weeks.

I found the story very witty and extremely funny - how highly did you rate the screenplay?

I liked it because I love horror films anyway... I love things like *THE EVIL DEAD* and that. I was surprised when it got past the censors, I really was, because they're getting pretty hot on things like that, and that was my worry. When I read the script I found it funny and I was saying things like "I've gotta have it!", it is my sense of humour... it's a real sort of get-drunk-down-the-pub-come-home-and-watch-a-video film, it really is one of them... I thought it was great. I really liked the script

but I thought it came over even better in the film to be honest... because I wasn't sure how it was going to go from script to film. There's always little bits you miss and some things you have to watch twice and I think this is the case with *REVENGE*.... It came across really well and I was amazed by the end result... the camera work, the lighting, the whole thing really...

Yeah, I was quite surprised by the high quality look.

Yeah, because it is a low-budget film and they (Jim Groom and Tim Dennison) had a hell of a time with it because no-one wanted to know... one, there was nobody in it they'd know and, two, it's not *CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG* or the *MARY POPPINS* of this world... there's a lot of people who've seen it who hate it, I think you either love it or you hate it, but the sad thing is, I don't think the world is ready for *REVENGE OF BILLY THE KID*, do you know what I mean?

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REVENGE OF BILLY THE KID - The poster says it all!

REVIEW

REVENGE OF BILLY THE KID (1991)

Medusa.

Directed by Jim Groom.

87 mins.

With the wild introduction, "Ladies and Gentlemen... this picture, truly one of the most unusual ever filmed, contains scenes, which under no circumstances should be viewed by anyone with a heart condition or anyone who is easily upset, we urgently recommend that if you are such a person or the parent of a young or impressionable child now in attendance, that you and the child leave the auditorium" and so goes the introduction to this truly triumphant all-British (over)dose of wit and gore!, **REVENGE OF BILLY THE KID** gobs onto the screen in a blaze of glory to tell the tale, and what a bizarre tale it is, of the MacDonald family, Britain's answer to the Leatherface clan, a simple bunch of "ooh arr" farming folk who live on a remote island with nothing to do but drink home brew, breed and mingle with the livestock!

The family consists of Pa, Gyles MacDonald, Ma, Gretta MacDonald, and their three offspring, two boys and a girl, all called, yes, you guessed it, Ronald MacDonald (the girl is called Ronnie for short!) and, of course, I must not forget Grandad, who dies at the breakfast table one morning, but is then quickly dumped onto the compost heap - waste not want not!

The family are shunned by the 'mainlanders' who fell foul of the MacDonald's in the past and their only contact is to buy farm produce from Ronnie on her frequent boat trips ashore - Ronnie has another reason for visiting though, she has the hots for a local lad.

The farm goat is almost dry of milk so Ma suggests that the animal needs "a good seein' to" and that Pa should take her to the mainland in search of a stud.

Pa sets off, bottle in one hand and goat in the other, he never makes it though and in a decidedly drunken state decides to give the goat the "best shafing she's ever 'ad'!! (sic) (sick)

As time passes the poor goat finally gives birth to a mutated goat/baby which Pa attempts to kill with a trusty pitchfork! The creature is saved by Ronnie who wants to care for little Billy, as she calls him, and bring him up.

Billy grows in size and starts to perform 'fetch' tricks for Ronnie, but runs off and kills a lamb and even has a few chops out of the rotting corpse of Grandad!

The creature comes back to the farm later in a much bigger and stronger state - Pa wants the "freak" out of the way and, after a battle, leaves Billy for dead in the river.

However, it appears that Billy is far from dead and, making a triumphant return from his would-be watery grave, proceeds to eat and mutilate his way through the MacDonald clan...

Well, well, well... a truly triumphant all-British splatter movie and one to be rightly proud of, coming over like an Anglo-BAD TASTE or a light-



Michael Balfour - The face that only a goat could love!

hearted **TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE**, **REVENGE OF BILLY THE KID** is a visual treat from beginning to end. Every bad taste joke in the book is cleverly blended with lashings of gore and splattery effects in just the right quantities of mirth and mayhem to enable it to rise way above the usual pathetic American attempts at mixing the two genres.

Young director Jim Groom has watched and learned well from his contemporaries and has carefully constructed and manipulated a highly original screenplay (which he co-wrote with Richard Matthews and Producer Tim Dennison) and an all-British ensemble of first rate character actors - and what characters they are! Farmer Gyles MacDonald is brought to life by veteran of the screen Michael (BATMAN) Balfour, a marvelously OTT performance of every gross mannerism you can think of and perfect dead-pan delivery which mirrors well against the amazing talents of the well-named Jackie D. Broad, who gives an amazing rendition of every man's worst nightmare of a wife, Gretta MacDonald - who could forget the couples' great 'love' scene atop the kitchen table shot in true **THE POSTMAN ALWAYS RINGS TWICE** style ("a bit of lard for lubrication!"); the sight of Gyles' advances on the poor goat; the sights and sounds of the family at meal times will stay with you for days; and two more scenes with Gretta popping the most revolting boil you ever saw and her meeting her maker whilst taking a dump!

Now, what about those effects? The goat creature, credited as Billy T. Kid, is depicted in three main stages of development, namely a puppetised baby, a juvenile naughty 'kid' and a fully-fledged goat-man from Hell, looking something like a cross between **RAWHEAD REX** and the Devil figure from Hammer's **THE DEVIL RIDES OUT**, was constructed by the team of Neil R. Gorton and Steven M. Painter in loving detail. They also give plenty of detail to a whole host of other effects - splat-packers should take note of this lot: severed limbs, blown-up chickens, an arm being ripped off, a squashed head and some very meaty moments with a hand-sythe, etc.

So, if your idea of a good movie involves blood, farting, gore, bog-roll jokes, more blood, masturbation, cow-shit (lots of that!) and monsters, then I suggest you slam this sucker into your VCR at your earliest possible convenience.

Even ex-Hammer publican, Michael Ripper, makes an appearance, in a pub scene naturally, and in the cast list the 'Village Idiot' was played by himself!! If you enjoyed **I BOUGHT A VAMPIRE MOTORCYCLE**, then you'll have a job containing yourself with this one - a very entertaining, quality production that is sure to give the virtually brain-dead British film industry a much needed kick up the arse!

I can't praise this film enough - oh, and it even has the guts to get away from the typical American no-balls-ending!

What are you doing reading this? Seek it out NOW!!

Paul J. Brown.

Yeah, I think it will find a following though.

I'd really like to think it would, but it is such an acquired taste... I think you've got to be a bit crude to enjoy it (*Gulp! Ed.*) and a bit open-minded.

Certainly that (*phew! Ed.*)... speaking of taste and everything, some of the scenes that you appear in are pretty sort of disgusting really, I'm thinking about that boil-bursting session in particular...

... the condom on the foot!

Yeah (*laughs*)... did you have any reservations about doing that sort of thing?

No, I love it! (*laughs*)... I really enjoyed doing it... the thing is, I'm quite crude as well and if I can come out with something that's gonna make people go "Ughh!" then I love it... so, this gave me a chance to do something like that and get paid for it, you know, to be scripted and have people en masse go "Ughh!" or whatever... and also, the other thing is, I'm pretty disguised and if I went past you you wouldn't know it was me. So, it's fine by me (*laughs*).

The lovemaking session with Michael on the kitchen table has to rank as one of the wildest I've ever seen on the British screen...

I know, it's very sort of **WOMEN IN LOVE**-ish really, very... tasteful... obviously, the bits with me and Michael was happening, not happening happening... but was as it was, but when Michael wasn't there it was just me rocking the table (*laughs*)... so I was actually making love to thin air and a table!

Did you have any trouble keeping a straight face?

Well you see, with Gretta you can get away with that... I was laughing at one point, and also, Gretta was laughing, if you see what I mean... at one point it hit me that I was sitting on this table, simulating making love to thin air (*laughing*)... the thing is, my mum wants to see it and I'm going "Oh mum, you don't want to see it!", because she's very naive and I've already told her about the fact that there was nobody actually there when I was (*laughing*) doing it. It seems a bit better to say that to Mothers, you know... I enjoyed it all the same!

How did you feel about having your death scene on the toilet?

Actually the death scene was done in Soho, behind Montage (the production company) itself... the actual toilet, where I was sitting straining, was in Soho... obviously it pans in on the farm and then goes into the toilet. I didn't mind at all, I suppose it was a bit sort of... you know, when they were telling me to squeeze my knees... it is toilet humour and people were going "Ughh!" which was the desired effect, so I didn't mind at all. I would have liked her to have died better... she was dragged, but I would've liked to have had my arm wrenched off or something, I enjoyed watching that bit later on in the film... and I thought Gretta would've deserved a bit more than she got really, but otherwise it was good fun.

Was the farm really as shitty as it looked on film?

Totally! The toilet was at the end of the garden hanging over a cliff and when you had to do whatever it simply fell down the cliff and went into the river below! Actually, what you saw on film made it look a lot cleaner than it really was! I was dragged through the cow-shit by the monster and it really was cow-shit... we had nowhere to wash down... it's in the middle of nowhere with no running water, electricity or gas or anything, so we had to dry in front of a fire, so you can imagine how I smelt at the end of the day with dried cow-shit all over me... and I crunched when I walked! I've gotta say that that was the worst bit... at first it was funny, but then on the second day you think "Oh God", you know, you're clean, you've had a bath and you've got to put all the clothes back on... and you're sitting there and the crew are looking at you like you're some sort of animal (*laughs*)



Billy-boy himself



Jackie in full Ma MacDonald make-up

because you stink basically! It was exactly like you thought, but ten times worse (laughs)!

You mentioned your mum earlier, have the rest of your family seen it and, if so, what do they think to it?

My brother and my sister have seen it... they thought it was better than they imagined it was going to be... they had seen a promo-reel that I had and they were quite shocked, but they hadn't seen the love scene, the boil scene, certain bits, and we sat there watching, my sister was with her husband and I thought "They're hating it, they're hating it" because they didn't say anything, they didn't talk. Then it finished and I said "What do ya think?" and they said it was good but they were still shocked at the same time (laughs), they were still sort of digesting it I think, but they enjoyed it. My brother has got the same sense of humour as me and he absolutely loved it, you know, "It's effing brilliant!", he's a real Jack-the-lad, he thought it was wonderful... which was fine by me... but, mother hasn't seen it yet, she's away in Egypt, so I'm quite dreading when she comes back!

Well it'll be a nice surprise for her I'm sure!

It will be, yes!

Do you know if the BBFC have snipped anything out at all?

Not as far as I know... I've asked, but not as far as I know at all. From what I've seen of the video, it's exactly what we filmed... obviously there's been a bit of cutting, but it's only what Medusa have done for time, they haven't cut anything that you think would be cut just bits and pieces that weren't needed.

Medusa are quite good with things like that.

Oh yeah, they're well into it.

What is your overall opinion of the finished film?

I think it could have been better cut and I'm sad that it's not gone on theatrical licence, you know, it's gone straight onto video, I would have loved it to have gone in the cinema... you know, for work reasons and for the fact that it deserved to go in the cinema. I think that everyone was sad that it went straight on video and into peoples houses, but this is the way it is now... video is the thing that sells... I

thought the cut could have been better, otherwise I think it's fine. I feel sad that the British film industry have done nothing to help... the guys have worked really, really hard to get it this far and it's just a shame they've had to work so hard to get it out. I've seen lots of horror films and I think this one is ten-times better, you know it's something different, it's something out of the blue...

Originality is the name of the game here.

Yeah, it's so sad that what happened with it has happened really. I do think that Medusa could've tried harder to have got it in the cinema, but that's just my opinion, you know.

You mentioned about REVENGE... being a British film and all, do you think it will help to pave the way for more low-budget British films?

Not at all! No! I wish I could turn around and say yes, but there's just no way. As I said, the lads really fought for it to get this far... no-one on the way wanted to help. I think the British film industry are just totally one-sided. They don't give beginners a chance or anything. They're not interested in anything off the cuff, the 'beautiful movies' are what they're into, the avant-garde type thing. It's sad!

You've already told me that you're a fan of horror films, THE EVIL DEAD in particular, do you have any other favourites in the genre?

I love THE EVIL DEAD, I'm a real fan of that, and I loved HELLRAISER and HELLBOUND... I think if I had to pick any it would be those and ALIENS, I thought that was great as well... they are my favourites, and also, REVENGE OF BILLY THE KID, even though I am a



A man and his goat!

little biased!!

Quite right, I don't blame you! So, what's next for you, have you any more horror projects lined up?

At the moment they are trying to get together ZOMBIE GOD SQUAD.

That's Jim Groom again isn't it?

Yes, Jim Groom and Tim Dennison... and they've written me a part in, which is really sweet, called 'Miss Obese', for some strange reason... and I'll be playing that hopefully. So, if anyone's out there with some money, because it is a good script, please ring Tim up as soon as possible (laughs). It would be nice to think that somebody out there would take an interest and help... it is pretty good and very funny.

Best of luck with the film and many thanks for taking the time to talk to FANTASYNOPSIS.

I've enjoyed it and good luck with the magazine.

• Thanks to Dave Lewis at Medusa.



JACKIE D. BROAD

The delightful and witty Miss Broad in the flesh as it were

WOLFEN

**MICHAEL WADLEIGH'S EARLY EIGHTIES
ECO-HORROR TRIP IS EXAMINED IN
DETAIL BY GLYN WILLIAMS**

SYNOPSIS

As the movie opens we crouch near ground level, watch through eyes which intensify even the drab colours of derelict surroundings and listen with hearing which amplifies the murmur of those distant men we watch until their voices and laughter boom and echo in our ears. We are experiencing the heightened senses of something intelligent but inhuman...

Real estate tycoon Christopher Van Der Veer, his coke-snorting wife, Pauline, and their no-messin' bodyguard are slaughtered following a ground-breaking ceremony for a multi-million dollar development in the slums of New York's South Bronx. The savagery of the crimes ("Mutilation, possible sexual assault, some dismemberment and maybe even cannibalism"), and the high-profile of the victims, prompts police chief Warren to recall Dewey Wilson, an unorthodox homicide detective with a reputation for getting results, from a period of enforced leave.

Executive Security, a high-tech private security firm which included the Van Der Veers amongst their clients, is keen to promote the idea that the crimes were the work of terrorists and persuade the police to team Wilson with Rebecca Neff, a psychologist with expert knowledge of terrorist behaviour.

While Neff uses Executive Security's state-of-the-art equipment to interrogate a motley band of suspect insurgents, Wilson, a man who works largely according to intuition, becomes increasingly sceptical of the premise that terrorism is the motive for the Van Der Veer crimes. This scepticism appears to be well-founded when Whittington, a cool, smart-arse coroner, is unable to find any metal traces from a weapon on the bodies but instead is intrigued to find traces of hair in the wounds.

Meanwhile, back in the decaying ruins of the South Bronx, mutilated remains of derelicts are discovered. Hairs are also found on these bodies and prove to be identical to those found on the Van Der Veers. The hairs are classed as 'not human'.

When Wilson and Neff visit the South Bronx they are drawn into a ruined church by mysterious, half-heard cries. As Neff ventures up a dark staircase to explore the upper floors Wilson experiences such a strong feeling of foreboding that he drags Neff from the church. Behind them, on the staircase, a glint of light is momentarily reflected in a pair of watchful eyes: the viewer's first fleeting glimpse of the 'wolves' which ferociously prey upon the humans encroaching upon their South Bronx territory.

Wilson and Neff retire to the safety of a nearby bar where, shaken, they discuss their experience in the church and begin to establish a warmth in their relationship which will inevitably stray beyond the professional. The viewer, meanwhile, once again watches through the eyes of the 'wolves' as they make a deliberate move across the bridge which separates the squalor of the South Bronx from the affluence of Manhattan.

The next day, Ferguson, an eccentric expert at the Central Park Zoo, identifies the hairs found on the

victims as being from a wolf but is adamant that the wounds are not typical of wolves and that there are no wolves in New York. He does, however, compare the wolf society with that of the native American Indian, an observation which intrigues Wilson enough for him to seek out Eddie Holt, an Indian with a history of violence against those he considers betrayed his ancestors and stole the Indian lands, but who retains a strange affinity with nature.

Holt works as a maintenance man on the bridge (which, Wilson notes, places him near the scene of the Van Der Veer murders) and professes to have an ability to 'shape-shift', to act and think like an animal. Later that night Holt demonstrates that ability by menacing Wilson in a 'wolf-like' manner.

Back at the morgue Whittington confirms that the victims' wounds were caused by animal teeth and reveals that only diseased parts of the derelicts' bodies had been left untouched, a clear sign of a non-human intuition to avoid bad 'food'. Ferguson, his original scepticism about wolf activity in New York now shattered, returns to the zoo to prepare to search for the creatures. He is unaware, however, that he is being watched by the wolves and, when he finally tracks them down, they are ready for him and he is killed.

Whilst Neff, the police and Executive Security continue to look for a terrorist link to the murders, news reaches Whittington of the discovery of similarly mutilated bodies amongst the slums of other American cities. Both he and Wilson are now convinced that the answer is to be found in the ruins of the Bronx and they decide to stake-out the ruined church where Wilson and Neff first sensed the presence of something threatening. The sophisticated night scopes, communication equipment and weapons are, however, no match for the guile and stealth of the wolves and the night ends in disaster as Whittington is killed in an attack where the viewer gets the first clear view of the creatures.

A badly shaken Wilson finds his way to the seedy Bronx bar which is the meeting place of Eddie Holt and the other local Indians. There he is told about a 20,000 year old breed of intelligent animals with the instincts of the redskin and the hunting prowess of the wolf: the Wolfen. These were the survivors of the white man's decimation of the Indian lands which had gone underground, and had re-emerged in the white man's "new wilderness", that of the city slums. The Wolfen survive by scavenging, feeding on the abandoned dregs of human society, but killing only

to survive and to protect their families. Now, however, those new hunting grounds are also being destroyed. Wilson returns to the flashy solitude of the Van Der Veer Tower where he ponders the Indians' words about the threat posed to the Wolfen's territory and the first signs of the Wolfen's intention to fight back. His thoughts, however, are interrupted by police chief Warren and Neff who break the news that members of the Gotterdammerung terrorist group (rallying call: "The end of the World, by wolves") have been arrested for the Van Der Veer killings. Despite their confidence, however, Wilson's instincts are telling him that no human agency is responsible for the crimes and that the real aggressors, the Wolfen, are near.

As Wilson, Neff and Warren leave the Tower and step into the strangely deserted street outside, the Wolfen silently surround them. When Warren attempts to escape he is butchered by the creatures but the ensuing confusion allows Wilson and Neff to retreat into the Van Der Veer Tower and seek the safety of the tycoon's suite. Within minutes, however, the Wolfen smash their way into the office and, amongst the plans, photographs and models of the Bronx redevelopment project, Wilson confronts the pack. Realising that a mere gun is useless he seeks a temporary truce by symbolically smashing the Bronx project model, a gesture greeted by triumphant Wolfen howls and their almost supernatural disappearance.

As the end credits roll the Wolfen lope unchallenged through the Manhattan streets...

REVIEW

*"They can see two looks away.
They can hear a cloud pass
overhead."*

There are many mysteries in the movie world but the disappearance of **WOLFEN** and its director, Michael Wadleigh, is one of the more perplexing. You may search long and hard without finding a copy of **WOLFEN** on even the dustiest shelves in the oldest of video stores; you can scan the sell-thru catalogues in vain; and you will need a long memory to recall a single TV screening several years ago (But what a glorious widescreen version it was! Ed.). The movie was commercially unsuccessful; it had mixed reviews; it has no cult following; it won no notable awards (with all respect to the Special Jury Prize at the 1982 Avoriaz Fantastic Film Festival); and it had no bankable names in the cast or behind the camera to promote it in subsequent years. Time, I think, to plead its case.

So why was it unsuccessful at the box office? Mainly, I suspect, because it didn't settle neatly into any particular genre pigeon-hole and therefore never reached a specific audience. The period around the end of 1980 and the beginning of 1981 was a heady time for fans of werewolf movies with the release of **THE HOWLING** and **AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON**. Because of its title and reported subject matter **WOLFEN** unfortunately found itself

lumped in with these two movies. It could never compete: it didn't have the make-up effects to rival those of Rob Bottin or Rick Baker; it didn't have a known horror movie director to match Joe Dante or John Landis; and it didn't feature genre favourites like Patrick Macnee, John Carradine or Jenny Agutter. More significant, however, was that the word soon went round that **WOLFEN** simply wasn't a werewolf movie in the accepted sense.

So, before we take a closer look at the movie, a warning to all fans of lycanthropic folklore. In **WOLFEN** you will see no shape-shifting under a full-



A tense moment from WOLFEN



Albert Finney ponders over the WOLFEN

moon; hear no echoing howls and screams in the mist of deserted moors or the gloom of shadowy forests; find no traditional remedies in silver bullets; and have no Lon Chaney Jr., Oliver Reed or David Naughton to re-emerge from beneath false snouts and stuck-on fur at the first glow of dawn. In **WOLFEN** there are no werewolves, but rather creatures more intriguing, more spiritual, more intelligent and more resilient. And, as we watch through their eyes, we become Wolfen ourselves: to stalk, kill, mewl in fear and howl in triumph; to share their emotions, live their history and identify with primal instincts to survive.

If it's the power of the Wolfen which permeates the entire movie the performances which director Michael Wadleigh gets from his actors are nevertheless outstanding. Albert Finney was so impressed with the character of Dewey Wilson, as well as the overall storyline, that he was tempted back to horror movies for the first time since he lugged around heads in hat boxes in **NIGHT MUST FALL** (1964). With two Academy Award nominations under his belt (for **TOM JONES** and **MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS**), along with a host of critically acclaimed stage appearances, Finney brings stature to the rather sad character of Wilson, a homicide detective in his forties going through a personal mid-life crisis as he questions his role in a society where he sees the Mister Big's of the criminal world escaping justice. He's got a drinking problem, there's a suggestion of past difficulties with the police authorities and, as the movie opens, Wilson is on enforced leave for reasons which the Chief of Police guardedly describes as "domestic".

And yet, despite his personal difficulties, Wilson is the first one the harassed police authorities turn to when faced with murders which are not only horrific in their ferocity but, more important, politically embarrassing with their suggestion of terrorist involvement. Wilson is unconventional. In a world of sophisticated hi-tech policing methods he relies upon intuition; in a system built upon arse-licking and political favours he opts out; in a society full of whizz-kids he meanders through his middle-age years with few thoughts of promotion. His philosophy on life is that which he developed in the Sixties. But he gets results and, whilst the politicians treat Wilson with suspicion, there is no mistaking the Chief of Police's impatience to get Wilson on the case and the relief of the other cops as he arrives at the murder scene.

The murder victims are celebrities. Christopher Van Der Veer is a hugely successful property speculator and, as the movie opens, his builders are encroaching into the South Bronx wastelands of New York, clearing slums and celebrating the ground-breaking

of Van Der Veer's latest development. The politicians love him but everyone knows he has enemies: he has a big, mean, gun-toting bodyguard to drive his bullet-proof car. But Van Der Veer, his mink-wrapped wife and the bodyguard are effortlessly, efficiently, silently torn to pieces (we know, we were there) amongst the eerie mobile sculptures of Battery Park. This is Manhattan, the sophisticated part of New York, Van Der Veer's natural territory, separated from the South Bronx by the imposing physical barrier of the Hudson River. And yet, as Van Der Veer has invaded other's territory, so too has his territory been invaded.

This theme of "society" being infiltrated by outsiders will be a powerful one throughout the movie. We'll hear how the white man invaded the American Indian homelands: how civilisation invaded the Wolfen territories: how the cities of the white man were in turn infiltrated by both the Indians (to work) and by the Wolfen (to scavenge): how terrorists wage war on (so-called) civilised society: how the rich and strong feed upon the poor and weak: and we'll see how a single detective can only confirm his worst fears about the Van Der Veer case by following his intuition into the mysterious world of American Indian folklore and superstition.

Wilson's investigation is in turn 'invaded' by the unimposing Rebecca Neff, played by the then-unknown Diane Venora (she had previously appeared in Mike Hodge's dull **THE TERMINAL MAN** but was later to enhance her reputation with good performances in Robert Mandel's **F/X**; Hector Babenco's **IRONWEED**; and Clint Eastwood's superb **BIRD** for which she received the New York Film Critics' 1988 Best Supporting Actress Award). Neff is an expert on the psychology of terrorists who,

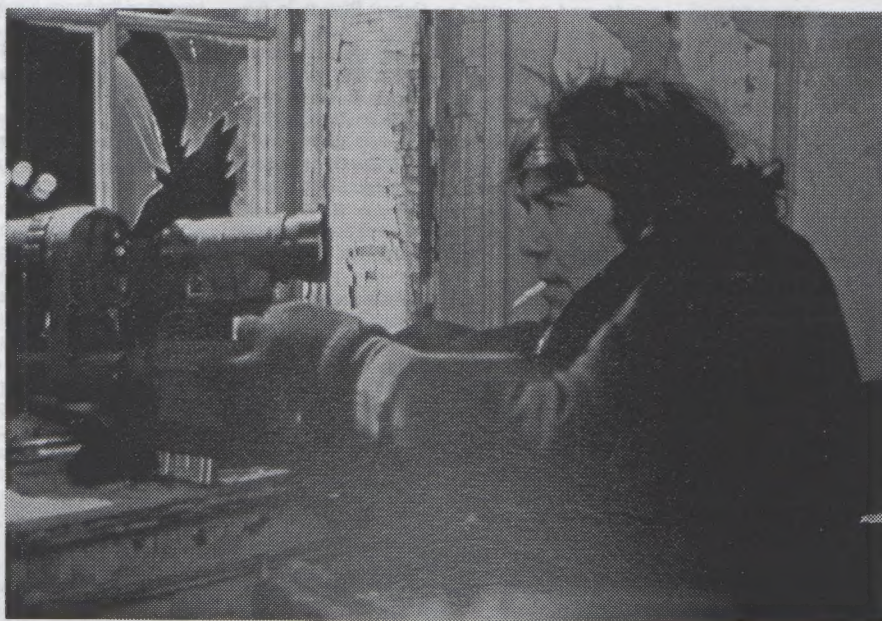
eavesdropping on a cacophony of sexual grunts and slurps.

The developing relationship between Wilson and Neff is apparent in the movie's most gripping scene. Whilst searching for clues in the desolation of the South Bronx slums they are drawn into a ruined church by what sounds like the soft cries of a child. As Neff starts to climb the rickety staircase to the balcony Wilson's intuition goes into overdrive and, sensing the presence of danger, he hustles Neff outside. In the gloom at the top of the staircase we see two pin-points of light reflecting in the eyes of an otherwise unseen Wolfen, whilst outside Wilson and Neff flee from the eerie howls of frustration which echo from the church.

Two other characters, the extrovert coroner Whittington and the quiet naturalist "Fergy" Ferguson, are sympathetically developed as the investigation proceeds and when both ultimately become victims of the Wolfen the sense of loss felt by Wilson is shared by the viewer.

It is the coroner Whittington who is the first to support Wilson's feelings about the presence of something more terrible than terrorists when he is unable to detect traces of metal (from knives or similar weapons) around the wounds found on the mutilated Van Der Veer bodies. Later, as slaughtered derelicts bearing similar wounds begin to turn up in the Bronx slums, Whittington is also able to show that, whilst parts of the carcasses have been eaten, any diseased organs have been fastidiously avoided. Such sophisticated choosiness eliminates any thoughts of "mere" crazy humans with cannibalistic tendencies. The character of Whittington (played by Gregory Hines in his movie debut) neatly compliments Wilson by having a similar intelligence and sense of humour,

although he also has a sense of urgency which Wilson apparently lacks. The scene in which he is killed by the Wolfen is powerfully significant as, not only is it the first time that we clearly see the creatures, but also because his death allows Wilson's fragile emotional balance to teeter enough to confront Eddie Holt and his Indian elders about an apparently supernatural enemy. The death of Whittington compounds the earlier sense of loss felt following the murder of the eccentric zoologist Ferguson (sympathetically portrayed by Tom Noonan who was to make such an impact in **MANHUNTER**). It is Ferguson who, when



Albert Finney takes his turn at Neighbourhood Watch!

the authorities are convinced, are responsible for the Van Der Veer murders. In a neat touch we hear that an active group of terrorists called Gotterdammerung even has "The end of the world, by wolves" as their motto. As, however, Neff dabbles with sophisticated surveillance and interrogation techniques director Wadleigh (who also has a walk-on part as a terrorist informer) uses her to allow Wilson to argue his intuitive, but ultimately persuasive, ideas about a threat even more powerful than organised terrorists.

There is, of course, the inevitable romantic sub-plot between Neff and Wilson, although this is thankfully understated and has little bearing upon the main plot other than perhaps to explain why an experienced psychologist allows her partner to easily persuade her that the case has a supernatural explanation. The only scene in which we see Wilson and Neff make love is remarkably unerotic as much of it is experienced as though we are listening through the ultra-sensitive ears of the nearby Wolfen,

a single animal hair is found in one of the victim's wounds, reluctantly confirms that the enemy is of the lupine variety. Of all of the movie's non-Indian characters it is Ferguson who is probably most in tune with the Wolfen and, in the movie's most poignant scene, Ferguson sadly watches a film of humans hunting and killing wolves whilst the Wolfen silently gather outside his window and share his pain and anger at the carnage shown on the screen. It comes as no surprise when Ferguson makes the first, albeit suicidal, contact with the Wolfen when he finds, and perishes in, their lair.

Although he is on screen for a comparatively short time, it is Ferguson who is also charged with putting across several of the movie's many ecological messages about conservation, the white man's rape of the wilderness and the destruction of the native American wolf packs both through hunting and depriving them of food by decimating the buffalo herds. His initial reluctance to consider the idea of wolves having moved into the city to prey upon

humans ("With all the psychos running around New York, you're trying to pin this rap on an endangered species?") is replaced by him sensing how appropriate that may be. He comfortably makes the same leap in logic which Wadleigh asks the viewer to make by simply asking, "What If...?" Thus, what if... the elite wolf survivors got smart and moved from the threatened forests and plains into the growing "new wilderness" of the city slum areas? Having accepted that the wolves have that intelligence it's easy then for Ferguson to make the connection with similar city-bound movements of the native Indian population and subsequently plant the seeds of recognition in Wilson's mind about ancient folklore and the role of the Indians "Wolves are like Indians. Wolves and Indians evolved and were destroyed simultaneously. Their societies were practically one and the same. They're tribal, they look after their own, they don't over-populate, and they're superb hunters."

To many critics the Indians are out of place in the movie and Wadleigh himself admits that their role is mainly to allow an insight into the Wolfen's thought processes, their drive and behaviour. I confess, however, to an uncomfortable feeling that the Indians are stereotyped: they are shown to be drunk, hostile, violent, slightly crazy but still reliant upon the white man for employment and shelter. Wadleigh, however, is adamant that the Indians are 'real' and that the dialogue used in their scenes are based on snatches of real, overheard Indian talk. There is no mistaking a sense of caricature, however, especially in the bizarre character of Eddie Holt (played by Edward James Olmos who was later to appear in **BLADE RUNNER** and a host of 'message' movies) who is often more of a red herring than a Red Indian especially when it is suggested that Holt was responsible for the Van Der Veer murders and then, later, is used to briefly tease werewolf fans when he claims an ability to shapeshift.

On the whole, however, Wadleigh's use of the Indians as a plot device is done expertly and without too much awkwardness. It does, moreover, allow Wadleigh to give us a memorably atmospheric scene set in a seedy Indian bar where Wilson, half-crazed by the death of Whittington, seeks the secrets of the Wolfen from the Indian elders. They recognise that Wilson is aware of the creatures ("You've seen them haven't you? You don't have the eyes of the hunter; you have the eyes of the dead") and they tell him of a 20,000 year old breed of intelligent animal with the instincts of the Redskin and the hunting prowess of wolves; of how the survivors of the white man's slaughter went underground, hid in the "new wilderness" of the city slums and survived by becoming scavengers, feeding on the abandoned down and outs ("Those who would not be missed"), the garbage of human society; and of how the Wolfen, which only kill to survive and protect their families, consider humans to be the savages ("Man kills for less").

And he is warned that the development of technology has been paid for by the loss of our vital senses, that humans face a foe who "Can see two looks away... Can hear a cloud pass overhead." This comparison of human and Wolfen senses is



A psychedelic trip or what? A WOLFEN's eye-view of the kill

a recurring theme throughout the movie with Wadleigh making extensive use of a sophisticated, unworldly 'point-of-view' experience where the viewer is allowed to actually step inside the world of the Wolfen. We see images of intensified colour which are viewed from just above ground level and hear sounds which are enhanced or distorted (whilst any music by James Horner is sparse and no more than required, the recurring sounds of wind, footsteps, echoes, heartbeats, bells, chimes and the mysterious mewls and howls of the Wolfen ensure that the movie is always aurally interesting). The audience is



Mrs Van Der Veer after an encounter with the WOLFEN

given no explanation for these disorientating experiences but rather we are left to gradually realise that we are seeing and hearing through the ultra-sensitive eyes and ears of something inhuman. Even a sense of smell is suggested by us seeing almost subliminal after-images of a previous presence or event. [Readers interested in the technical details of the movie's photographic effects should read the article by Robert Blalack in the November 1981 issue of **AMERICAN CINEMATOGRAPHER**, whilst Carl Fullerton's make-up effects are discussed in **FANGORIA** #28].

These 'Wolfen-view' shots work beautifully and even viewers jaded by the point-of-view shots offered by movies ranging from the stalk-and-slash of the **FRIDAY THE 13TH** series to the Steadicam roller-coaster ride of **EVIL DEAD** (and regional ITV viewers will surely recognise the influence of **WOLFEN** on the advertisements for Banks' beers!) can't fail to be emotionally charged by these scenes. And these shots are used extensively: for more than twenty minutes (spread over various times during the movie) we are invited to become Wolfen, allowing us to empathise with them whilst retaining the initial suspense by not actually showing the creatures until the final reel (Wadleigh has claimed that this ensures that the audience is never sure until then whether the killers are human, extra-terrestrial or animal, although it's difficult to believe that any viewer will mistake the Wolfen for anything other than a highly intelligent and hugely determined animal).

Thus the audience grows to regard the Wolfen as characters with as much depth as Wilson, Neff, Whittington, etc. We know about the Wolfen's history; we acknowledge their

undoubted intelligence; and we develop a sympathy for, and recognise a humaneness in, their need to kill only to protect and survive (indeed Wadleigh has argued that the Wolfen even have an empathy with their victims as they only kill those who indicate by their lifestyle that they welcome the release of death). After all this build-up there is, of course, the danger that, when we actually get to see the Wolfen, we'll be disappointed. But not so. They are as imposing and as impressive as we have come to hope and expect and, except for an irritating tendency to put an unworldly sparkle in their eyes, no special effects

are used to enhance the power and elegance of the creatures. Real wolves were used in the scenes of the Wolfen prowling the streets and infiltrating the buildings of New York and, although the creatures were expertly trained by renowned animal trainer George Toth, entire City locations were nevertheless fenced off to stop the wolves from escaping and armed police were ordered to shoot any which breached the fence (filming was done on location at the New York Stock Exchange and Fulton Street Fish Market, in Central Park, Battery Park and the South Bronx, and on Manhattan Bridge, as well as on the sound stages of Queen's Astoria Studios). Everyone involved with the filming was apprehensive of the wolves (thus adding to the reality of the final confrontation scenes) as they were as tall and as heavy as the actors and crew themselves. The sense, however, of the Wolfen's domination is enhanced even more by showing them towering over humans whilst standing on cars, desks, roofs and bridges and it's difficult not to feel awe as the final scenes show the creatures loping triumphantly along Wall Street having made the first bold incursions into the hunting grounds of the ancient enemy.

No movie is perfect, of course, and there are two scenes which I find interrupt my enjoyment: that in which Eddie Holt acts out a naked shape-shifting ritual that is not only ludicrous but also reinforces my uncomfortable feeling about the Indian stereotyping; and then, having spent the entire movie building up the credibility of the Wolfen, there is an otherwise gripping scene in the Van Der Veer suite which unfortunately implies that the creatures have supernatural powers (they are apparently able to appear on, and then disappear from, a balcony on top of a high rise office block).

In retrospect I also find myself wondering why the Wolfen, having spent so long successfully concealed in the slums of cities throughout America, should suddenly jeopardise their survival by breaking cover following an isolated development in one city. It's tempting, however, to think that, in these days of almost compulsory sequels, this could actually be built upon to allow for a second instalment in which the open conflict between man and Wolfen could be considered and in which the links between the creatures and the Indians could be developed. Unfortunately, whilst **THE HOWLING** sequels proliferate in number (and, because of their awful quality, subsequently tarnish the reputation of the original), and John Landis prepares to release a follow-up to **AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON**, there continues to be an almost wilful disregard for **WOLFEN**.

So what went on behind the scenes to contribute to **WOLFEN**'s box-office failure and critical panning? Most will point to the influence of director Michael Wadleigh and accuse him of obscuring the excellent horror/thriller aspects of the movie with a mish-mash



WOLFEN

of Sixties-style "messages" about conservation, politics and social issues. Certainly, at a time when horror movies were big business, he rather unwisely alienated a large proportion of the horror audience by labelling **WOLFEN** as "The first thinking man's horror film". But this was typical of a man whose career in the theatre, TV and movies had revolved around a self-confessed urge to use entertainment as a departure point for broadcasting his social and political views.

Wadleigh, who was born in 1941, cut his teeth as a director in the theatre before moving to the American Public Broadcasting Service where he directed documentaries. He became aware, however, that he was unlikely to reach the large audiences he craved unless he used entertainment as a vehicle for his messages. His first venture onto the big screen was the hugely successful **WOODSTOCK** (1970) which, in my opinion, remains the best music documentary ever. Amongst the superb concert footage, however, Wadleigh was able to subtly look at the counteraction between contrasting societies with the farming community of Bethel in upstate New York watching aghast as 500,000 young people 'invaded' a local farm for a massive free festival of peace, love and music.

Despite the critical and commercial success of **WOODSTOCK** Wadleigh then retreated from the movie scene for almost a decade to concentrate on writing screenplays. All, however, were rejected as being either too expensive or too political and so, whilst looking to repeat the success of his earlier venture into movies, he saw an opportunity to lay-out his beliefs within the plot of a strong horror story, **WOLFEN**. To the basic storyline of the 1977 novel (**THE WOLFEN**) by the then unknown Whitley Strieber, Wadleigh added his messages about the ill-treatment of animals, the subjugation of minority groups, the disregard for society's down-and-outs, and the dangers of manipulative big business.

When confronted, however, with Wadleigh's final

cut Orion Films became concerned with what they felt was too much emphasis on the "messages" and there were fears for the fifteen million dollars which the studio had invested in the movie (the critical and commercial disaster of John Frankenheimer's 1979 ecological horror movie **PROPHECY** was still fresh in the minds of the studio managers). There was also no doubt that Wadleigh was being overly optimistic by submitting a movie which ran for two and a half hours! The studio inevitably asked for the message element of **WOLFEN** to be reduced, for the depiction of the audience-pleasing horror and violence to be emphasised and for some of the Steadicam work to be re-shot. They handed the task of re-editing what they felt was a sprawling, overlong movie into a tighter, more commercial horror movie to John Hancock (the director of **LET'S SCARE JESSICA TODDEATH**) who reduced the final cut to 115 minutes, mainly by shrinking the 'message' element of the movie. Wadleigh, however, has since said that he is satisfied that the depiction of enough of his concerns about conservation, political manipulation and social deprivation still remain to make audiences aware of more than just a story of horror and blood letting. Since the release of **WOLFEN** Michael Wadleigh has faded from the movie scene as mysteriously as his movie. He is reported to have worked on something called **OUT OF ORDER**, although details are scarce, and wrote the screenplay for an ET-inspired SF movie called **THE VILLAGE AT THE END OF THE UNIVERSE**. He started to direct this in 1986 but it was eventually completed by Peter Hunt and released direct to video in the UK in 1992 under the title **HYPER SAPIEN : PEOPLE FROM ANOTHER STAR**. All reports suggest that it's unexceptional (correct. Ed.) but retains some of the hippie-style messages which are almost Wadleigh's trademark.

CAST & CREDITS

Albert Finney (Dewey Wilson); Diane Venora (Rebecca Neff); Edward James Olmos (Eddie Holt); Gregory Hines (Whittington); Tom Noonan (Ferguson); Dick O'Neill (Warren); Dehl Berti (Old Indian); Peter Michael Goetz (Ross); Sam Gray (Mayor); Ralph Bell (Commissioner); Max M Brown (Christopher Van Der Veer); Anne Marie Photamo (Pauline Van Der Veer); Sarah Felder (Cicely Rensselaer); Reginald Vel Johnson (Morgue Attendant); James Tolkan (Baldy); John McCurry (Sayad Alve); Chris Manor (Janitor); Donald Symington (Lawyer); Jeffrey Ware (Interrogation Officer); E Brian Dean (Fouchek); Jeffery Thompson (Harrison); Victor Arnold (Roudenbush); Frank Adonis (Scola); Richard Minchenberg (Policeman); Ray Serra, Thomas Ryan (Detectives); Tony Latham, David Connell, Jerry Hewitt (Victims); Ray Brocksmith (Fat Jogger in Park); Michael Wadleigh (Terrorist Informer); Joachin Rainbow, John Ferraro, Glenn Benoit, Eddy Navas, Ricky Hawkeye, Pete Dyer, Paul Skyhorse, Gordon Eagle, Javier First-Day-of-Light, George Stonehouse, Julie Evenig Lilly, Jane Lind, Rino Thunder (Native Americans); Annie Gagen, Cullen Johnson, Robert Moberley, Tony Stratta, Max Goff, Robert L King, Caitlin O'Heaney, William Sheridan (ESS Operators); Linda Gary, Burr DiBenning, Pat Parris, Dan Sturkie, Charles Howerton, Corey Burton, Andre Stolka, Mel Welles (ESS Voices).

Directed by Michael Wadleigh; A King-Hitzig Production; Produced by Rupert Hitzig; Executive Producer - Alan King; Screenplay by David Eyre and Michael Wadleigh; Based on the novel "The Wolfen" by Whitley Strieber; Production Co-ordinator - Adeline Leonard Seakwood; Unit Production Manager - William C Gerrity; Casting - Cis Corman; Location Manager - Peter McIntosh; Post Production Executive - Marshall M Borden; Post-Production Co-ordinators - Arthur Coburn, Jacque Toberen; 2nd Unit Director - Rupert Hitzig; First Assistant Directors - Steve Barnett, Alex Hapsas, Steven Felder, Hall Hitzig; Photography - Gerry Fisher, Fred Abeles; Camera Operator - Tom Priestly; Steadicam Operator - Garrett Brown; Insert Photography - Robert Bailin, Don Stern; Louma Operator - Andrew Romanoff; Special Photographic

What the press said:

"WOLFEN is a pot-pouri of ideas tangentially related to the werewolf revival... (it) is top heavy with issue-consciousness."
Kim Newman - NIGHTMARE MOVIES

"Whitley Strieber's so-so novel has been transformed into a classy, thoughtful but not very frightening horror film."
Michael Weldon - THE PSYCHOTRONIC ENCYCLOPEDIA OF FILM

"Surreal, allegorical mystery is satisfying - and could have been great."
Leonard Maltin - TV MOVIES AND VIDEO GUIDE

"Superior performances and exhilarating camera work with some really stunning opticals."
Chas Balun - THE GORE SCORE

"Nuthatch horror movie with a message though providing little of either commodity. Clearly a waste of money."
Leslie Halliwell - HALLIWELL'S FILM GUIDE (7th edition)

"A werewolf movie for the ecology-conscious age."
John Collis - TIME OUT

"WOLFEN is quite stunning to look at."
Phil Edwards - STARBURST

"When it's time for the titular entities (mutant wolves with super intelligent tracking abilities) to reveal themselves the film falls faster than dog doo-doo."
John Stanley - REVENGE OF THE CREATURE FEATURES MOVIE GUIDE

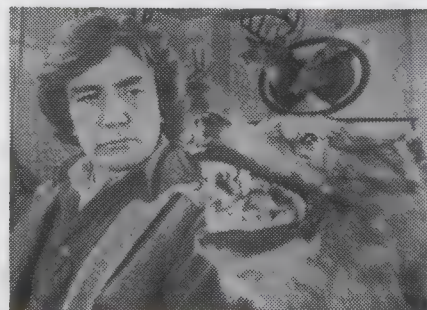
"The movie is elaborately made, with subjective camerawork and extensive optical effects, but low on thematic clarity and tension."
Phil Hardy - AURUM FILM ENCYCLOPEDIA, VOL.3 : HORROR

"A kind of woozy psychedelic extravaganza... one of the worst trips in a long time."
Richard Combs - MONTHLY FILM BULLETIN

"this moody and atmospheric horror tale is memorable for the fine photography"
John Elliot - ELLIOT'S GUIDE TO FILMS ON VIDEO

"Intellectual, scientific - and very dull."
Simon Button - FILMS

Effects - Robert Blalack; Optical Effects - Modern Film Effects; Praxis Optical Support - Beth Block; Praxis Optical Effects - Betzy Bromberg, Chris Regan, Candy Lewis, Nancy Rushlow, Laurel Klick, Sarah Pasanen, Anne Van Der Vort, Donna Tracy; Editors - Chris Lebenzon, Dennis Dolan, Martin Bram, Marshall M Borden, Jordan Leondopoulos;



"... a gottle of geer, a gottle of geer"



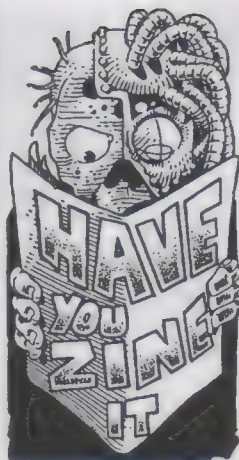
"Yep, he's definitely dead!" - Albert Finney and Gregory Hines at the morgue

Production Designer - Paul Sylbert; Art Director - David Chapman; Art Director (Special Effects) - Eion Sprott; Assistant Production Manager - G MacBrown; Script Supervisor - Sidney Gecker; Property Master - Jimmy Raitt; Set Decorator - Alan Hicks; Set Dresser - Herb Mulligan; Sound Sculptures - Bernard Baschet Bertoia, Francois Baschet Bertoia; Master Scenics - Edward Garzero, Richard Hughes; Special Effects - Ronnie Ottesen, Conrad Brink; Music - James Horner, "Jitterbug Boy" by and performed by Tom Waits; Music Editor - Robert Badami, Kenneth Karman; Costumes - John Boxer, William Loger; Make-up - Allen Weisinger; Hair Stylist - Frank Bianco; Wardrobe Supervisor - William Loger; Special Effects Make-up - Carl Fullerton; Titles - Wayne Fitzgerald; Foley Sound Editor - Robert R Rutledge, Scott Hecker; Sound Recording - Dennis Maitland Snr., Kim Maitland, Dan Wallin; Sound Re-recording - Michael Minkler, Ken S Polk, James A Corbett; Sound Effects Supervision/Design - Andrew London, Robert Grieve; Gaffer - Rusty Engels; Key Grip - Billy Miller; Foley Sound Supervision/Design - Robert R Rutledge, John Roesch; Sound Effects Editor - Lon E Bender, Stan Gilbert, Anthony Milch, John Duffy, Randy Kelley, Paul Bruce Richardson, Marvin Walowitz; Research - Dulcinda Gose; Production Assistants - Jonathan Filley, Jack Benson, Timothy Burke, Janiss Garza, Paula Mazur, Bruce Sands, Pat Barrow, Michael Besman, David De Lia, Dan Helleck, Lauren McGowan, Bruce Stoff, Jerry Winikoff; Stunt Co-ordinator - Vic Magnotta; Stunts - Bill Anagnos, Lisa A Cain, Janis Feiger, Jerry Hewitt, Richard Kline, Edgar L Mourino, Konrad Sheehan, Nicholas Toth, Tony Farentino, Ricky Hawkeye, Joaquin Rainbow, Glenn Benoit, Eddy Navas, Tim Gallin, Steve James, Pete Miller, Tony Stratta, Victoria Vanderkloot; Animals/Technical Supervision - George N Toth; Animal Trainers - Helena T Walsh, Joe Hornak, Nicholas S Toth, Jeff D Haynes; Best boy - Ken Connors; Construction Grip - Jim Halligan; Grips - John Donahue, Chris Gerrity, Mike Miller; Boom Operator - John Fundus; Prop Assistants - William Bishop, Bobby Wilson; Electricians - Mike Burke, John F Burke; Extra Casting - Joy Todd; Production Accountant - Lucille Masone Cannon; Unit Publicist - John Kaye; Stillman - Michael Ginsburg; First Assistant Cameraman - Jim Hovey; 2nd Assistant Cameraman - Don Biller; Additional Steadicam Sequences - Dan Lerner, Ted Churchill; Assistant to Michael Wadleigh - Anne Kingman Page; Assistants to the Producer - Patricia Sibley, Destiny Borden; Assistant Location Co-ordinator - Brooke Kennedy; Assistant to Cis Corman - Martha Schumacher; Photo Researcher - Pat Barrow; DCA Trainee - Debbie Marrs; Assistant Production Co-ordinator - Susan Bednarczyk; Chief Carpenter - Carlos Quiles Snr; Teamster Captain - James Fanning; Assistant Sound Effects Editors - Donald Ortiz, John M Lowery; Dialogue Editors - Jay Cassidy, Joanne D'Antonio, Jill Demby, Charles McCann, Burton Weinstein; Assistant Editors - Mary Bauer, Thure Gustafson, Rudolph Freeman, Howard Heard, Kevin Lee, William Sands, Milan Klein, Richard Nord, Randy Thornton, Camilla Toniolo; Apprentice Editors - Terrisa Algrin, Anita Brandt, Destiny Borden, Darren Holmes, Cecilia Keyes; Negative Editing - Donah Bassett, Cathy Carr; Video Segments - Welsh Video Services Inc.; Communication Equipment - Motorola; Computer Equipment - Hewlett-Packard, R2E of American Urango Systems Inc., Victor Graphics Inc., Data General, Nec Information Systems, Magnavox Display Systems, Sanyo. Prints in Technicolor. Filmed in Panavision. Recorded in Dolby Stereo.

1981

Length : 10,318 ft.
Running Time : 115 minutes

Production Company : ORION PICTURES for Warner Brothers.
Distributor COLUMBIA-EMI-WARNER



THE FS GUIDE TO GOOD READING

All zines listed are not necessarily the latest issues available but the most recent seen by the editor. If your zine is not listed then send a copy along to the editorial address and a current copy of FANTASYNOPSIS

will be sent in exchange.

The prices given do not include postage, so remember to add some extra cash when ordering and tell them that FANTASYNOPSIS sent ya! Happy reading.

BITS & PIECES

#7 - 28 A4 pages - \$3.50.
Universal Vs. Hammer, Killer Plant Movies, Reviews incl. Seeding A Ghost, Till Death, Ghoul Sex Squad, The Brood, The Alien Within, Silver Spear.
John Clayton, The Horror And Fantasy Film Society Of Baltimore, PO Box 6220, Baltimore, MD 21206, USA.

BLACK

#12 - 28 A4 pages - £1.20.
Andy Milligan, Laura Gemser, Aristide Massaccesi, Reviews galore incl. The Orgy Box, Singapore Sling, Seytan, Across 110th Street. This is in English!
Mikael Bomark, Kallbrinksv. 13, 141 44 Huddinge, Sweden.

BLOOD AND BLACK LACE

#2 - 44 A4 pages - £3.00.
Dario Argento, Two Evil Eyes, Michele Soavi, The Church, The Sect, Sam Arkoff, Mario Bava, Shock, Baron Blood, Mariano Bano, Ghosthouse, Demons, A Cat In The Brain, Stagefright, Spider Labyrinth.
Andrew Featherstone, PO Box 1689, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM23 5BW.

CINEFANTASTIQUE

Vol 23 #5 - 64 A4 pages - £3.60.
Babylon 5, Ren & Stimpy, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III, The Muppet Christmas Carol, Wilder Napalm, Army Of Darkness, Doppelganger, Leprechaun, Time Trax, Charles Band, David Allen, Tetsuo, Pet Sematary Two, Blade Runner.
Frederick S. Clarke, 7240 W. Roosevelt Road, Forest Park, IL 60130, USA.

THE DARK SIDE

#29 - 68 A4 pages - £1.95.
Bram Stoker's Dracula, Francis Coppola, Censorship, Dracula Movies, Reviews, Fanzines, Michael Burnett, Italian Vampires, Female Vampires.
Allan Bryce, Stray Cat Publishing, PO Box 146, Plymouth, PL1 1AX.

DARK STAR

#9 - 44 A4 pages - £1.75.
Sex & Manga, Eerie Indiana, Lloyd Kaufman, Death Race 2000, David Cronenberg, Reviews incl. The Grandmother, Jacob's Ladder, Body Parts.
Rob Dyer, 64 Arthur Street, Gravesend, Kent, DA11 0PR.

DARK TERRORS

#4 - 40 A4 pages - £1.75.
Bray Studios, Dracula Prince of Darkness, Rasputin The Mad Monk, Journey To The Unknown.
Mike Murphy, "Avalon", Ventnor Terrace, St. Ives, Cornwall, TR26 1DY.

DEEP RED ALERT

#2 - 60 A5 pages - \$4.95.
Dylan Dog Horror Festival, Gianetto De Rossi, The Living Dead At The Manchester Morgue, Lucio Fulci, Jim VanBebber, Michele Soavi, Reviews incl. Fangs, Door To Silence, The Art Of Dying, Cain's Cuthroats, The Reflecting Skin.
Chas. Balun, 8456 Edinger Avenue, Suite 111, Huntington Beach, CA 92647, USA.

DETROIT GRAVES

#5 - 36 A5 pages - £1.50.
Black Sunday 6, The People Under The Stairs, Charles Manson, Married With Children, Timescape, Mirror Images.
Ian Carroll, 52 Cotehele Avenue, Keyham, Plymouth, Devon, PL2 1LU.

EYEBALL

#3 - 32 A4 pages - £3.50.
Dario Argento, Tras El Cristal, Baby Blood, Matador, Necronomicon, The Sadist of Notre Dame, Wild Beasts, Naked Lunch.
Stephen Thrower, 20 Kintyre Court, New Park Road, Brixton Hill, London, SW2 4DY.

FACEUGGER

#3 - 36 A5 pages £1.00.
Lots of Alien/Aliens material which is what you might expect from The British Aliens Fan Club.
Simon Clarke, The British Aliens Fan Club, PO Box 11, Liskeard, Cornwall, PL14 6YL.

FANGORIA

#120 - 70 A4 pages - £3.10.
Creature From The Black Lagoon, Hideous Mutant Freekz, The Temp, Army Of Darkness, Gary Oldman, Winona Ryder.
Anthony Timpone, Starlog Communications International Inc., 475 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016, USA.

FANTASY FILM MEMORY

#4/5 - 76 A5 pages - £9.00.
A beautifully illustrated tome entitled 'directed by Dario Argento'.
Pierre Jouis, 21-23 rue Victor Hugo, 94700 Maisons-Alfort, France.

FATAL VISIONS

#12 - 40 A4 pages - \$4.50.
Tsui Hark, Annie Sprinkle, Otis O'Toole, Robert Englund, Jon Hewitt, Reviews incl. Stone Cold, Freejack, Naked Lunch, Spider Labyrinth, Myra Breckinridge, Blood Queen.
Michael Helms, PO Box 133, Northcote, VIC, 3070, Australia.

FILM EXTREMES

#1 - 40 A4 pages - £2.50.
Drillbit, Dust Devil, Jim Riffel, Chow Yun Fat, Jorg Buttgeriet, Brett Piper, Fanzines, Reviews incl. The Undertaker And His Pals, Flavia Priestess Of Violence, Tetsuo II, Godzilla Vs. King Ghidorah + Free Flexidisc.
Ken Miller & Rick Baker, PO Box 409, London, SE18 3DW.

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#108 - 12 A4 pages - \$1.00.
Buffy The Vampire Slayer, Single White Female, Pet Sematary Two, Raising Cain, Innocent Blood, Kickboxer 3, Dr Giggles, Reservoir Dogs, Bad Lieutenant, Bram Stoker's Dracula, Whispers In The Dark...
Rick Sullivan, 469 Hazel Street, Clifton, NJ 07011, USA.

GOREZONE

#25 - 68 A4 pages - £3.00.
Dracula, Wings Hauser, America's Deadliest Home Video, Tony Todd, Candyman, Dr. Giggles, Braintead, Umberto Lenzi, Scanners III.
Anthony Timpone, Starlog Communications

International Inc., 475 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016, USA.

HORROR PICTURES COLLECTION

40 A5 pages - £2.00FF.

The Best of Argento - The European Leader. (Also available: Abbott & Costello - The Time Of Their Lives; Christopher Lee (part 2) - One More Time). Gerard Noel, 90 rue Gandhi, 46000 Cahors, France.

IN THE FLESH

#11 - 48 A4 pages - £1.90.

Nasties, Poor Albert & Little Annie, Peter Jackson, Tim Dennison, Hellraiser, Reviews incl. Succubus, Justine, Basket Case 3, Naked Lunch, Twin Peaks Fire Walk With Me, Bloodrage, Chopper Chicks In Zombie Town, Drillbit, Forbidden Planet, Nocturnal Demon, Hero & Thief.

Steve C., Box 1, Garageland, Focus, Princess Victoria Street, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 4BP.

KILLING MOON

#4 - 36 A4 pages - £1.50.

Hugh Gallagher, Night Of The Demon, Alien, Mariano Baino, John Carpenter, The Texas Chainsaw Massacre, Big Meat Eater, Killer Dog Movies, Videodrome, Braindead.

Alex J. Low, House A7, 1265 Pollokshaws Road, Shawlands, Glasgow, G41 3RR, Scotland.

MAGAZINES OF THE MOVIES

#3 - 96 A5 pages - £2.50.

Everything you ever wanted to know (and more) about *all* the film related mags and zines released in 1991 + Alan Jones, Monster Mag... If you're a collector, you can't do without it!

#4 should be out in March 1993 and will include (provisionally) articles on CINEMA 57 (the horror issue), CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT and many more film mags not reviewed in previous issues.

Ray Stewart, 45 Killybawn Road, Saintfield, Ballynahinch, Co. Down, BT24 7JP, N. Ireland.

MKULTRA

#8 - 40 A4 pages - £1.95.

Fifties Science Fiction, William Burroughs, David Cronenberg, Paul Naschy, Bernard Herrmann, Reviews incl. The Boneyard, The Pit & The Pendulum, Cat O'Nine Tails, Dark Shadows, Monster In The Closet, Thundercrack, The Fighting Fist Of Shanghai Joe, The Severed Arm.

Andrzej Karczewski, Flat 5, 40 Denbeigh Street, London, SW1V 2ER.

NORA K.

#6 - 32 A5 pages - £1.50.

Devoted to the films of Traci Lords.

Steve Rag, 118 High Street, Eastleigh, Hants, SO5 5LR.

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#3 - 88 A5 pages - \$5.00.

Santo + everything you need to know about Mexican Horror/Wrestling Movies!

Steve Fentone, PO Box 742 Stn. Q, Toronto, Ontario, M4T 2N5, Canada.

PIGMEAT

#1 - 52 A4 pages - £1.95.

Biker Movies, John McNaughton, Thomas Harris, Dirty Harry, Mondo Movies, Freddy, The Island Of Death, Lonesome Cowboys, Jacob's Ladder.

Mark Piper & Mark Forrest, 63 Cowdray Way, Hornchurch, Essex, RM12 4AX.

PSYCHOTRONIC

#14 - 76 A4 pages - \$3.50.

Timothy Farrell, Brad Dourif, Robert Blossom, Spook Shows, Obs, Reviews incl. Sweet Bird Of Aquarius, Severed Ties, Timebomb, Mikey, Highway To Hell, Lucky Ghost, Something Of Mine, Xtro II, The Long Hair Of Death, Death House, Love Feast...

Michael Weldon, 151 First Avenue, Department PV, New York, NY 10003, USA.



by Ray Stewart, Editor of Magazines of the Movies

Time was when I didn't mind picking up the odd issue of STARLOG YEARBOOK or BLOODY BEST OF FANGORIA. But my attitude is changing. I'm becoming hostile to seeing articles regurgitated and spewed out under a different cover. It's happening more and more nowadays. In fact, the past twelve months must go down in film magazine history as the year of the reprint.

As if there weren't enough Starlog Communications titles to contend with, along came Trident with a sunny summer idea to launch not one but three new magazines containing material which had already appeared in STARLOG, FANGORIA and associated titles in the US.

MOVIE STARLOG UK, HORRORZONE and FINAL FRONTIER would have been fine if no-one in the UK had ever laid hands on the originals. But these American imports are readily available in specialist stores and I, for one, have no intention of settling for second best.

SAMHAIN

#36 - 40 A4 pages - £1.75.

Sam Sherman, Quentin Tarantino, Vipco, Gabe Bartalos, David F. Price, Milton Subotsky, Fiction, Reviews.

John Gullidge, 77 Exeter Road, Topsham, Exeter, Devon, EX3 0LX.

SHIVERS

#4 - 32 A4 pages - £1.65.

Trauma, Bruce Campbell, Gaspar Noe, Christmas Horrors, Clive Barker, Tom Savini, Peter Jackson. Alan Jones, Visual Imagination, PO Box 371, London, SW14 8JL.

STARBURST

#173 - 52 A4 pages - £2.20.

Ramsey Campbell, Roman Coppola, Frankenstein The Real Story, ILM, Majel Barrett, Reviews. Stephen Payne, Visual Imagination, PO Box 371, London, SW14 8JL.

SUBTERRENE

#8 - 30 A4 pages - 50p.

Oriental Movies, Don't Go In The House, Black Sabbath, Guinea Pig, Prisoner Of The Cannibal God, Festival Reviews.

Anthony Cawood, 6 Daleside Avenue, Pudsey, Leeds, LS28 8HD.

TRASH CITY

#12 - 52 A5 pages - £1.25.

Samurai Pizza Cats, Heathers, Reviews, Anime, Fanzines, Customs, Fighting Females, In The Line Of Duty Movies.

Jim McLennan, 7 Tummons Gardens, South Norwood Hill, London, SE25 6BD.

VIDEOOZE

#4 - 32 A4 pages - \$3.00.

Lisa And The Devil, Helga Line, The Weekend Murders, Blade Of The Ripper, Le Foto Di Gioia,

Trident had hoped for sales of 30,000 per issue. At the time of writing it's too early to say how successful they have been. There have been two issues of MOVIE STARLOG UK and one of HORRORZONE while FINAL FRONTIER, which from issue three was published by Phoenix Press, has appeared monthly since July.

Then came the announcement that top-selling film magazine EMPIRE had obtained the rights to publish a UK version of PREMIERE, which has been appearing on US newsstands for the past five years. The launch issue in September and follow-up in November were impressive and the changes in appearance and text have made the magazine much more than a reprint, but really, what's the point. PREMIERE UK and the original have appeared side by side in the shops and there are plans for the UK issue to appear monthly from March 1993.

In November THE DARK SIDE produced a 'best of' issue reprinting articles from their early, out of print numbers and weighing in at a blood-curdling £3.95. All colour it may be but it was not worthy of such an extravagant price tag.

FILMREVIEW, now under the STARBURST banner, got in on the act with an issue containing a compilation of the year's reviews.

It's up to the public to let publishers know what they think of all these reprints. Collectors, like myself, pick them up grudgingly. More objective readers can make their point by leaving them on the shelf.

Still, a few new UK titles have got under way in 1992. These include ADULT VIDEO & SATELLITE, DARK TERRORS, FILM EXTREMES, THE LATE SHOW, MONSTROID, SHIVERS, STATE, WE BELONG DEAD and VIDEO REVIEW.

New titles from America include ASIAN TRASH CINEMA, FEMME FATALES, HIGHBALL, MONSTER INTERNATIONAL and SCARY MONSTERS.

No longer with us are ACADEMY, TERROR (just two issues) and WATCH IT, a fortnightly which lasted just five issues before it folded in June.

Tomb Of Torture, Deviation, Web Of The Spider Bob Sargent, PO Box 9911, Alexandria, VA 22304, USA.

VIDEO WATCHDOG

#15 - 84 A5 pages - \$5.50.

Laird Cregar, John Brahm, The Evil Of Frankenstein, The Face At The Widow, The Mad Executioners, Alien, Naked Lunch and more.

Tim Lucas, PO Box 5283, Cincinnati, OH 45205-0283, USA.

VISCERAL FIX

#4 - 22 A4 pages - £1.00.

Dracula, Joe D'Amato, Nasties, Alien Contamination, Nekromantik 2, Bad Karma, Schizo.

Craig Warrilow, 67 Thorncliffe Street, Lindley, Huddersfield, HD3 3JL.

WE BELONG DEAD

#2 - 52 A4 pages - £1.50.

The Penalty, The Vampire Lovers, The Bride Of Frankenstein, Vampire Circus, Freaks, Ingrid Pitt, Mask Of Satan, Poe.

Eric McNaughton, 27 Ewart Road, Forest Fields, Nottingham.

WET PAINT

#36 - 20 A5 pages - \$2.00.

Planet Of The Apes, Violence, Ren And Stimpy, Twin Peaks Fire Walk With Me, Angel Face.

Jeff Smith, 1817 Oates Dr. Apt. 529, Mesquite, TX 75150, USA.

WORLD OF FANDOM

Vol 2 #16 - 92 A4 pages - \$3.50.

Alien 3, Sleepwalkers, The Unnamable Returns, Nicolas Roeg, The Borrower, Batman Returns, Errol Flynn.

Al Shevy, 2525 W. Knollwood St., Tampa, FL 33614-4334, USA.

"... and (Step)father makes three"

An Overview of the STEPFATHER trilogy by Peter Benassi

The horror film sequelizations game is a well-played and competitive one, immensely popular with the public and consequently extremely profitable for its manufacturers. Friday the 13th proved to be a frighteningly fortunate date for Jason Voorhees whose own series began and continued throughout the blood-drenched eighties. Not to be outdone by any tricks, Michael Myers treated himself to his own rather belated series on Halloween. Freddy Krueger made his mark, so to speak, with a place in his own right on Elm Street. And let's not forget moteller Norman Bates who re-opened for business and psychosis after a 22 year incarceration period. It comes as no surprise then that late-eighties genre villain Jerry Blake (aka. The Stepfather, making his auspicious entrance in the 1987 winner of the same name) should eventually get his own little series of fright flicks too. And why not?

Joseph Ruben's **THE STEPFATHER** made quite an impression on both horror-movie buffs and respected film critics alike on its release and was, in effect, the terror sleeper of that year. Ruben's effectively Hitchcockian direction was one reason the film scored. Another was undoubtedly actor Terry O'Quinn's superb and uncomfortably convincing portrayal of the psychologically unbalanced murderer

that is the Stepfather, probably the most believably frightening celluloid psychopath since the late Anthony Perkins' depiction of everyone's favourite mummy's boy, Norman Bates in the Hitchcock classic, **PSYCHO** (1960).

THE STEPFATHER introduced and explored the fascinating, but equally terrifying, character of Jerry Blake, a strange and at times truly dangerous individual whose sole obsession is to establish the ideal family. Nothing too wrong with that you might think; after all, everyone wants theirs to be a happy home. True, but Jerry tries... too hard. When all is not well all of the time within the familial unit, Jerry flips. And how! The slightest disagreement, the remotest ripple in the pool of family life and Jerry makes quite a splash by going berserk and becoming decidedly homicidal.

At the onset of the original film, we see the subsequently clean-cut (sorry!) Jerry Blake as the unshaven, bespectacled Henry Morrison. Only the names are different, the characters are exactly the same; Henry has just butchered the family he has married in to because they have in some way failed to live up to his expectations, Jerry will undoubtedly behave likewise.

One year later and Jerry has a new wife, the lovely,



O'Quinn and Schoelen in **THE STEPFATHER**

recently widowed Susan (played by one-time 'Charlie's Angel', Shelley Hack) as well as a very distant step-daughter, Stephanie (Jill Schoelen). Stephanie is sweet sixteen and wary of Jerry from the word go, but it's not until she witnesses her hitherto benign stepfather "letting off a little steam" in the basement one afternoon that her suspicions of him are validated. Aware of the Morrison murders, Stephanie decides to play detective, ultimately hoping to prove that Henry and Jerry are one and the same.

THE STEPFATHER is a timebomb of a movie; the turn of events in its narrative leads us to expect an electrifying climax of blood and violence. Suffice to say, we are not disappointed, since the continually promised ferocious finale is delivered, and dexterously so. The Stepfather himself ends up being savagely stabbed and shot. We assume he is no more. At least we did until the (quite unexpected?) appearance of **THE STEPFATHER 2** in 1989.

Not so much a sequel as a virtual retread of its predecessor, **THE STEPFATHER 2** is admittedly surprisingly entertaining stuff considering it has little or no originality. Terry O'Quinn reprises his role as the now familiar family man who, we learn, was not in fact killed after all the slashing and maiming at the end of the first film, but merely wounded, sporting physical scars to match his already existing mental ones. Now one of the patients of the Puget Sound Psychiatric Hospital, Jerry, in-between constructing a miniature wooden "dreamhouse" in the sanitarium's workshop, attends private "hand-cuffs off" sessions with Dr. Joseph Danvers. Sadly, the doc's attempts at mutual trust and understanding between doctor and patient fail miserably when Jerry decides to kill him after having plotted a particularly crafty escape. Once free, Jerry adopts the new name of Dr. Gene Clifford, gets himself a house and takes up the new profession of (get this!) a family guidance counsellor, a career to which he's about as perfectly suited as Hannibal Lecter is to working as a gourmet chef! Inevitably, he decides that the time is right to have another stab (ouch!) at playing pop to another unlucky fatherless family. After finding no success whatsoever with the total turn-offs on "Videodatelectronics", "Gene" falls for the attractive Carol (played by genre regular Meg Foster), a divorcee with a young son named Todd (Jonathan Brandis). It's plain sailing between them until Carol's ex, Phil (Mitchell Laurence), shows up proposing that they give their marriage another go, for Todd's sake at least. Guess who's about to become an ex-ex? To celebrate, "Gene" cracks open a bottle of wine... over Phil's head and, just for



"Come to Daddy" - Terry O'Quinn as **THE STEPFATHER**



THE STEPFATHER

good measure, does him in with the shards of glass and then dumps the mutilated body. When Carol's friend, Matty (Caroline Williams), does some snooping and discovers concrete evidence which proves categorically that Jerry 'ain't Gene, you just know she's gonna regret her find. You could say she gets pretty hung up about it all. Next thing you know, the wedding bells are ringing for "Gene" and Carol, but minutes before our bride utters the dreaded "I do", a crucial eleventh-hour exposure causes everything to fall into place and consequently the ceremony is cancelled. We are subsequently treated to another scorcher of a climax which itself culminates in young Todd making it patently clear to the audience that he really is a die-hard hammer fan.

A worthy, if equally unnecessary, sequel/re-tread (whichever you prefer), **THE STEPFATHER 2** may have very little in the way of having something new to offer, but, thanks to Jeff (FROM A WHISPER TO A SCREAM) Burr's efficient direction, another bravura performance from Terry O'Quinn and the aforementioned superbly stirring climax, the flick is undeniably slick and satisfying. If **THE STEPFATHER II** was uninspired and superfluous, then the third (and with any luck the last) entry in the series, entitled **STEPFATHER III** (I just marvelled at the ingenuity!), must surely be deemed dreadfully derivative and downright unwanted! Already not having a lot going for it because it's the follow-up to a not entirely successful sequel, the film is further weighed down by length (an unbelievably overlong 115 minutes) and the monumental, but not entirely surprising, absence of Terry O'Quinn who is replaced for this one by Robert Wightman. Wightman tries hard, very hard indeed as a matter of fact, but, despite his commendable efforts, just can't seem to hit the right note as the deranged dad. Not that I feel it is the fault of Wightman; far from it, I have tremendous respect and admiration for his determination. There's no getting away from it, Terry O'Quinn is one helluva act to follow and filling his shoes is an

incredibly courageous and unenviable task to take on. Kudos to Wightman, then, for his praiseworthy attempts. It's just a pity he's wasted in this piece of superfluity; such talent deserves far better material. **STEPFATHER III** is unquestionably one step too far... and in the wrong direction to boot. The film opens with a brief, but painfully graphic plastic-surgery sequence (featuring footage from an actual operation, no less!). Yes, it appears to be cop-out time again, folks; the problem of having cast another actor in a, by now, established role was apparently too great for the scriptwriters who obviously felt that the only way to get round the situation was to opt for the ol' "trotty-trotty to the



Wedding Day blues for Meg Foster as she lets her true feelings out in **STEPFATHER 2**

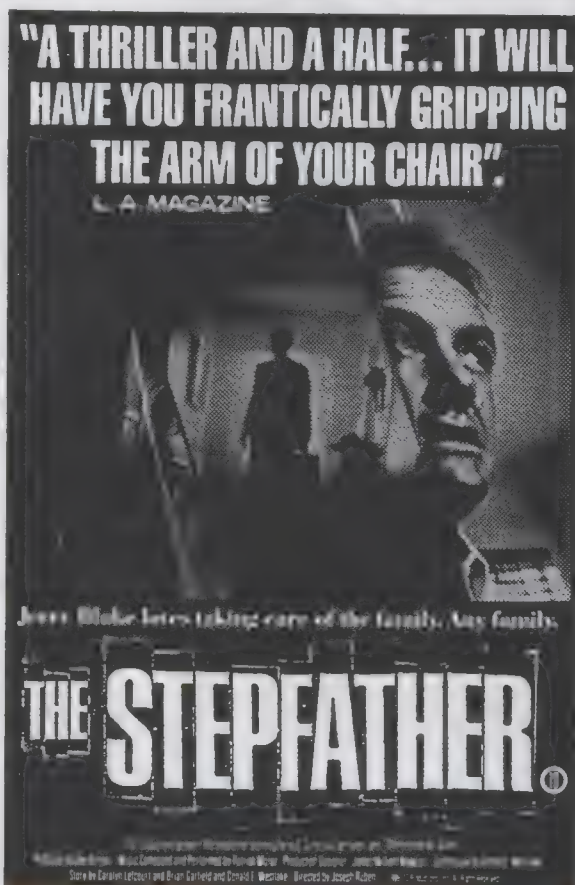
plastic surgeon's" intro, presumably leaning heavily on the excuse that the film's character needed the op anyway because he was so badly scarred.

Anyway, no sooner has the plastic-surgeon put down his scalpel than he's brutally bumped-off by his remodelled patient. With a brand new face but

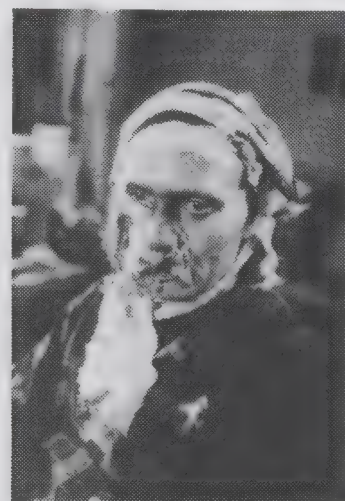
Sherlock Holmes, Andy, taps into his ultra-mega-sophisticated home computer (no Commodore 64, this!!), hacking police files and doing photo-reconstructions in an effort to uncover the true identity of his dodgy step-dad. Not surprisingly, he does just that. It's just a great shame that it takes him so long. The scene is then set for yet another nerve-shredding climax, which, unfortunately this time, doesn't materialise. Instead, we're subjected to a moderately tense set-to which finally erupts in utter grossness (indeed, this entry in the series is by far and away the bloodiest and most violent, but it's none the better for that). As far as the *Stepfather* himself goes, well, put it this way, unless Dr. Frankenstein is still in business, a fourth film seems rather unlikely, to say the least!

Routinely directed by Guy Magar (also the co-writer), the man responsible for the lacklustre supernatural horror flick, **RETRIBUTION** in 1988, **STEPFATHER III** is undoubtedly the weakest link in the trilogy, which isn't exactly earth-shattering news to learn. A few frail attempts are made by the scriptwriters to inject a little originality into the hackneyed storyline - most notably the idea of having "The Stepfather" float between two fatherless families - but invariably their inclusion is regrettably counterproductive.

So...to quote Meatloaf, "two outa three ain't bad". To summarise, then, **THE STEPFATHER** will always be looked upon as the superior little chiller that it is;



with the same old bad attitude, Jerry Blake/Dr. Gene Clifford becomes Keith Grant and heads immediately for Remakesville. There, predictably enough, he finds another fatherless family to take care of, if you get my meaning, namely the somewhat bimbo-ish divorcee, Christine (Priscilla Barnes) - who falls for Keith's charms at a party where he's dressed as a pink-costumed Easter bunny, if you please - and her young invalid son, Andy (David Tom). After wiping a rival suitor (Stephen Mendel) off the face of the Earth with a quick shovel to the head, Keith unsurprisingly weds Christine. From hereon, 'fraid it's all too familiar formula fodder, folks. Expectedly sceptical, super-sharp-witted computer whizz-kid and embryonic



Robert Wightman after plastic surgery in **STEPFATHER III**

its sequel as a slick and entertaining re-hash; and its second sequel as a definite mistake. As for the eponymous anti-hero himself, he richly deserves to take his place alongside the other celebrated cinematic psychopaths.

FAVOURITE

FANTASY
FILMS

OF...

Jill Schoelen

Coming to acting after being spotted during a song and dance routine in a talent contest, New York-born Jill Schoelen served her time with roles in such TV series as *THE LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE* and a number of TV movies, including an early genre appearance in Wes Craven's *CHILLER* in 1985, before coming to prominence with an assured and engaging performance in *THE STEPFATHER*. But what should have been the springboard to a variety of challenging parts has, instead become side-tracked into a series of undemanding roles in a succession of horror films of varying quality: *CUTTING CLASS*, *THE BITE*, *THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA* and *POPCORN*.

Too talented to be stuck in such a rut for long (just like that other Scream Queen made good, Jamie Lee Curtis) we should enjoy her horror appearances while they last, and long may she grace the genre, even if only on an occasional

basis. Meanwhile, Ms. Schoelen has kindly furnished us with a list of her own top ten favourite fantasy films...

1. **THE WIZARD OF OZ** (1939) - Directed by Victor Fleming.

2. **STAR WARS** (1977) - Directed by George Lucas.

3. **THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK** (1980) - Directed by Irvin Kershner.

4. **WILLIE WONKA AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY** (1971) - Directed by Mel Stuart.

5. **RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK** (1981) - Directed by Steven Spielberg.

6. **THE LADY IN WHITE** (1988) - Directed by Frank LaLoggia.

7. **E.T.: THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL** (1982) - Directed by Steven Spielberg.

8. **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST** (1991) - Directed by Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise.

9. **SHADOW OF A DOUBT** (1943) - Directed by Alfred Hitchcock.

10. **WHATEVER HAPPENED TO BABY JANE?** (1962) - Directed by Robert Aldrich.



The lovely Jill Schoelen

Jill Schoelen



Jill's all-time #2

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FAMILY pLANNING

**STEPPATHER III's
Robert
Wightman
interviewed
by Paul J. Brown**

24/2/92 - Telephone call from Godmanchester, England to Los Angeles, USA.

Paul J. Brown: You've had experience of taking over a popular character before with your portrayal of John-Boy in 'The Waltons', has that experience made it easier for you in adapting for the pivotal role in **STEPPATHER III**?

Robert Wightman: No, I don't think there was much of a tie-in to prepare for this role... I'd never seen **THE STEPPATHER** before I got the audition. It was just a matter of studying the video material... and just doing the best that I could. The director (Guy Magar) didn't want me to do an exact replication of Terry (O'Quinn)... there wasn't really a sense of what I was doing on 'The Waltons'... when I went on 'The Waltons' there were pictures of Richard Thomas and things like that, there was a sense of performance instilled and still lingering... in this it was entirely different, the **STEPPATHER** not really a national phenomenon... it's not really embedded in the American conscious and awareness type of thing.

Going from John-Boy to a full-blooded serial-killer is quite a contrast as we've already said, was this one of your main reasons for taking the part, was it an attempt to get away from your 'nice guy' image?

Yeah... yeah, especially to turn it on and steer it right in within the movie... you can see that character progress within the movie from the John-Boy type sensibility to a serial-killer, a madman... I don't know if I have that much of an image because 'The Waltons' was done almost twelve maybe thirteen years ago, although I understand from when I was in England a year ago that 'The Waltons' was still playing there...

Yeah, it's still playing!

Still playing!? I've done other things since then so I don't think I really have that image now... but, just the wild transformation of the character was an acceptable diversion for me.

You said that you watched Terry O'Quinn's cassettes - how did you rate his performances in the first two pictures?

As far as I'm concerned, I thought he was brilliant in

the first **STEPPATHER** movie... I was really impressed... I was not familiar with him as an actor and I thought he was great... and he made my job a lot easier because he portrayed such a specific character. The second film was quite a bit inferior than the first... with a different director and a different writer... and I only watched that once... I think Terry seemed a little less inspired in that one. I thought the

They were both good sports about being manhandled... some stunt doubles were used though. I remember I had to spill out some lines as I was knocking Priscilla Barnes around and that was a touch and go thing... it was hard... I remember having some trouble when I was knocking her around in the nursery at the end... screaming at her and knocking her into a little trellis... it was tough because there was precision going on and I'd never really done too much knocking people around... but she was a good sport.

You mentioned the director earlier, Guy Magar, did he allow you any input into the script and did you make any changes at all?

Not really... I gave him some input... there were some little lines that I inserted a couple of times... but, basically he kept to his vision of the character. He wanted him quite dirty, quite passive... sexually, almost stiff in away of normal social contact. He helped maintain that kind of awkward bit... when he was stiff, repressed, no exterior... sometimes I got too relaxed, too much myself.

Were the gruesome opening plastic surgery scenes intentionally shot in a blue light to get it passed without cuts?

Yes, that's exactly right... yeah, I think it would have gotten an 'X' rating because that was real plastic surgery... they had to go in and shoot that themselves because there had never been... the only visual record of plastic surgery had been on video tape so they had to go in and literally film plastic surgery being done... that was a real operation! The camera operator was actually sick while he was doing it!

That's a great story! Did you have to undergo any make-up for that shot where your photograph is shown alongside that of Terry O'Quinn's on the computer montage?

No.

That's amazing because the resemblance between the two of you was really staggering in that shot!

Really!? Well that's good... I think that's more to the credit of the director for the way he sized the shot and kind of lead the audience to believe they were seeing a likeness... and maybe my general head shape and bone structure are the same but our features are not that similar... but, no, I didn't have any make-up on



John-Boy was never like this - Robert Wightman makes his mark in **STEPPATHER III**

first one was one of the best acting jobs I'd ever seen!

Yes, I agree with you there. Did you have any difficulty in the scenes where you had to physically manhandle your two lovely leading ladies (Priscilla Barnes and Season Hubley) and what were they like to work with?



Just another one of Robert Wightman's victims - I guess he couldn't find his spade

for that.

What's the American critical and audience reaction to this film and have you had any feedback from the original STEPFATHER fans?

No, because the movie hasn't been released over here!

Well, when is it coming out?

It's subject to a test marketing next month (March 1992) as to whether they release it at all I guess... it's not in the hands of ITC anymore... it's in the hands of a small company that's primarily into video things and I think they weren't prepared for the movie to look as good as it did, so they're now in a bit of a quandary about whether to release it or not! It's appeared in England so fast because ITC is a British company.

The ending is quite graphic and very 'final' looking so it must mean curtains for the STEPFATHER series - the big question is, if it is very successful, would you do it again?!

Ah... probably, yeah... it depends on the script... yeah, I'd like to do it again... there's things I'd like to change about my performance... yeah, I'd probably do it again.

With that in mind, what do you think of the whole sequel business in general, do you think that filmmakers should spend more time and money on new projects rather than 'safe' follow-ups?

Well... you know... film is a business as well as an art form, so I guess the profit motive is always gonna dictate what people do. If they can make money out

of it they'll shoot it... and I guess sequels don't necessarily have to be inferior to the originals... sometimes it's the opposite... it just depends on the individuals and each script as it comes along and each movie as it's shot as to whether it's any good... it doesn't necessarily have to be bad... although it often is!!

That's a fair comment. Are you an admirer of horror films in general?

Not really as an adult... when I was a kid I used to love monster movies, you know, FRANKENSTEIN, DRACULA...

None of the modern films really grab you then?

I haven't really seen that many... I do like David Cronenberg's films, he is quite a master of it... Romero, his early films were quite fun... I never saw any of the 'Freddy' movies or FRIDAY THE 13TH so I can't really comment on them, but I understand that a couple of those were pretty good.

So what's next for Robert Wightman, have you any more horror projects in the pipeline?

No, I don't... in fact I don't have any projects lined up. I'm waiting to hear on a couple of things... I have nothing definite.

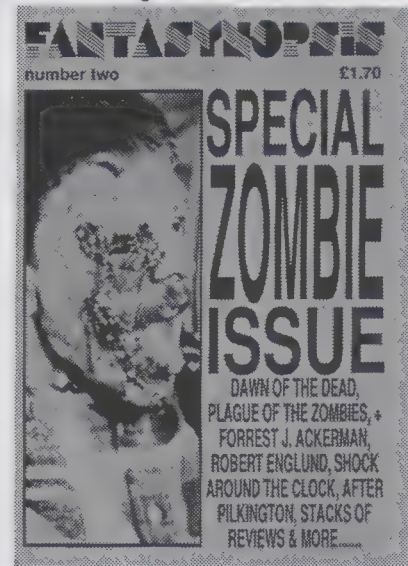
Well I hope you find something good soon... many thanks for talking to FANTASYNOPSIS and best of luck for the future.

Thank you.

* Thanks to Fiona at Foresight Communications.

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Rewind the Moon



The History of The Lycanthrope on Screen by Paul J. Brown

Werewolves have held a special interest for horror film makers and fans alike throughout the history of the cinema - one of the classic monsters, right alongside the likes of Dracula, Frankenstein's Monster and The Mummy.

To tie in with this issue's werewolf theme FANTASYNOPSIS presents a semi-detailed run-down of the whole lupine saga.

As with the vampire, werewolves have built up their own mythology and each film plays to these ideas, occasionally breaking in a new law or striking up a new variant on an old theme. There are numerous ways to create the beast ranging from inheriting the disease to being bitten, etc., and the methods of dispatch are many, but usually by being struck with something silver. Whatever method is employed the films never stray too far from the creation process through to death theme.

The various make-ups and special effects employed to represent the creatures have risen from cheap and tacky fangs and stick-on hair to elaborate Oscar-winning prosthetic designs, so much so, that one wonders how much more today's film makers can tell and show us? However, one thing's for sure, and that is that the cinematic cycle of the werewolf seems to run in stages and with the news that John Landis is to film **AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON** it perhaps the time is right for a new pack of werewolf movies, but let's just hope that we are offered an exciting and innovative slant on the story...

The following is not meant to be the definitive listing of all werewolf flicks and some of them are very borderline inclusions, but if you can add to it in any way, then please write in to the editorial address. On with the films...

THE WEREWOLF (1913) - according to the invaluable Aurnum Encyclopedia, "seemingly the first werewolf", an eighteen minute short in which a Navajo Indian woman raises her daughter into a white-man-hating werewolf.

WHITE WOLF (1914) - Universal quickly followed suit and also produced a werewolf flick based on American Indian legend.

LE LOUP-GAROU (1923) - an early French effort that I know very little about.

ISLAND OF LOST SOULS (1932) - the first screen version of the H.G. Wells 'Island of Dr. Moreau' - not really a werewolf film, but it is worth a mention because it features a whole stack of Beast-Men.

THE WEREWOLF OF LONDON (1935) - the first *real* werewolf picture starring Warner Oland and Henry Hull as two lycanthropes locked in a battle to own a rare Tibetan flower which only blooms at midnight and is the only known antidote to their affliction. Reasonably effective make-ups (handled by Universal's legendary Jack Pierce) but lacks any

of the familiar werewolf traits and legends.

THE WOLF MAN (1941) - Lon Chaney Jr.'s most notorious role as Larry Talbot, the first modern-day archetypal werewolf. Silver was used for the first time as a method of dispatch (by a blow to the head from a silver-topped cane), also on show was the pentagram symbol, which came to be a familiar addition in future movies. Chaney plays the sympathetic role to the hilt. This film really set the scene for the werewolf film in general. Good furry make-up, once again handled by Jack Pierce.

THE MAD MONSTER (1942) - George Zucco and Glenn Strange

teamed up to get caught in the wake of Chaney's **WOLF MAN** - this 'effort' had mad doc Zucco injecting wolf blood into Strange in the hope of creating an army of super-soldiers.

THE UNDYING MONSTER (1942) - a tale of old family curses linked by lycanthropy - only just a werewolf pic and short at just over an hour long.

LE LOUP DES MALVENEURS (1942) - another rare French variation on the werewolf legend.

FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN (1943) - while trying to beef up their box-office returns Universal teamed up Larry Talbot, yes, Lon Chaney Jr. again, with Bela Lugosi's Frankenstein monster - ludicrous plot, not helped by ridiculous cutting and hammy acting from the ill Lugosi.

THE RETURN OF THE VAMPIRE (1944) - Bela Lugosi plays a vampire who gets revived from his grave by a bomb during the London Blitz of WW2. The vampire has a werewolf servant, played by Matt Willis, who eventually brings about the demise of his master.

CRY OF THE WEREWOLF (1944) - werewolves and Gypsies mingle again, as with **THE WOLF MAN**. This one involves Nina Foch inheriting the disease from her dead mother.

IDLE ROOMERS (1944) - a Three Stooges short that featured 'Lupee The Wolfman' (Duke York) who goes mad whenever he hears music!

HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1944) - they're back again, this time benefiting from the presence of Boris Karloff as a scientist and John Carradine as Dracula - a real monster-mash and quite good fun!

HOUSE OF DRACULA (1945) - ditto, minus Karloff. Lively enough but, by now, all too familiar.

LA BELLE ET LA BÊTE (aka. **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST**) (1946) - classic French version of the Perrault fairytale. Surprisingly good make-up and gorgeous photography.

SHE WOLF OF LONDON (1946) - June Lockhart is mixed up with murder, bad dreams and werewolves. **ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN** (1948) - they're all here again in this sad and sorrowful outing, which was the first in a series of A&C monster flicks - Chaney's last go at playing Talbot.

JUNGLE JIM IN THE FORBIDDEN LAND (1952) - low budget vehicle for Johnny Weissmuller in which he slogs it out with some missing link creatures that look uncannily like werewolves.

HARAM ALEK (1953) - another mystery title - this one is from Egypt of all places!

THE WEREWOLF (1956) - Steven Ritch turns lupine when a radiation serum goes wrong - uninspiring.

I WAS A TEENAGE WEREWOLF (1957) - Michael Landon stars in this B-movie classic directed by Gene Fowler Jr. Yet another serum is the cause. Much mayhem, plenty of screaming and that notorious scene in the gymnasium! (Landon later reprised the role in a brief dream sequence in TV's **HIGHWAY TO HEAVEN**).

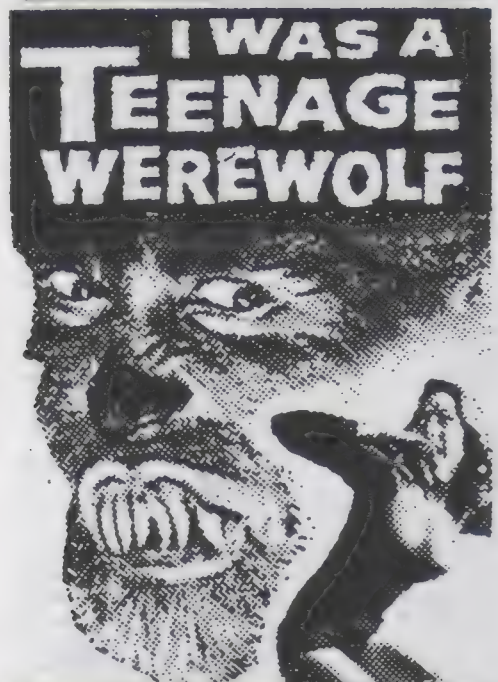


Lon Chaney Jr. as Larry Talbot
THE WOLF MAN



John Howard in **THE UNDYING MONSTER**

HAVE **YOU** SEEN
THE MOST AMAZING MOTION
PICTURES OF OUR TIME?



STARRING
MICHAEL LANDON
STAR OF "BONANZA"

CASTLE OF THE MONSTERS (aka. **EL CASTILLO DE LOS MONSTROUS**) (1957) - a pathetic Mexican attempt at mixing Abbot & Costello style humour with monsters - as you would expect, all the usual monsters appear.

DAUGHTER OF DR. JEKYLL (1957) - a ridiculous

attempt at injecting lycanthropic blood into the old Stevenson story in which the mad doc's daughter is led to believe that she is a werewolf.

HOW TO MAKE A MONSTER (1958) - great pic and a must for lovers of AIP's classic monster movies. The plot concerns a crazed movie make-up artist who mixes drugs with make-up and as a result the wearers believe that they are the monsters they portray! Gary Clarke dons the werewolf make-up as worn by Michael Landon in **I WAS A TEENAGE WEREWOLF**.

THE FACE OF THE SCREAMING WEREWOLF (aka. **LA CASA DEL TERROR**) (1959) - Lon Chaney Jr. dons the fur and fangs once more in this Mexican monsterthon - very poor.

THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF (1960) - The first colour version, and some say the definitive werewolf tale. Classic Hammer with a story of love conquering evil. Oliver Reed sports Roy Ashton's locks and gets shot with a silver bullet in a clock tower. Required viewing for all!

WEREWOLF IN A GIRL'S DORMITORY (aka. **LYCANTHROPUS**) (1962) - great exploitation title but a poor film all the same. Curt Lowens is the werewolf in charge of a girl's reform school. Tries hard but could do better.

HOUSE ON BARE MOUNTAIN (1962) - an "adults only" nudie flick that featured Bob Cresse, the movie's co-producer, as a voyeur in drag running an all-girls school with a werewolf for an assistant!!

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST (1963) - a

remake of the classic fairy-tale with the eponymous beast played as a werewolf conceived by Jack Pierce's make-up.

EL DEMONIO AZUL (1963) - a Mexican

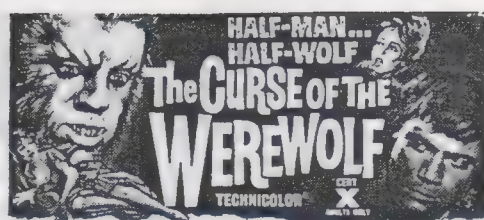
title that I've been unable to find any info for.

DR. TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS (1964) - a classic Amicus anthology vehicle

in which one segment features a female werewolf.

DEVIL WOLF OF SHADOW MOUNTAIN (1964) - obscure western/horror film in which a cowboy turns into a beast after drinking water from a wolf's paw print!

THE SHE WOLF (aka. **LA LOBA/LOS HORRORES DEL BOSQUE NEGRO/LOS MISTERIOS DE**



CLIFFORD EVANS · OLIVER REED · YVONNE ROMAIN · CATHERINE FELLER
Produced by JACQUES HENRI. Directed by TERENCE FISHER. Screenplay by JOHN LEECH. Based on the novel "The Werewolf of Paris" by GUY DE MAUPASSANT. Executive Producer ROBERT NELSON O'LEARY. Executive Producer MICHAEL BARBER. A HAMMER FILM PRODUCTION FOR UNIVERSAL INTERNATIONAL.

BOSQUE NEGRO/THE HORRORS OF THE BLACK FOREST (1964) - wild 'n' wacky Mexican tale with red-herrings aplenty, two werewolves and a specially trained werewolf-hunting dog!

BIKINI BEACH (1964) - a wild n' wacky AIP vehicle for Frankie Avalon - forget the inept teen/pop plot. Val Warren, who apparently won a 'Famous Monsters' make-up contest, appears as a werewolf! Boris Karloff and John Ashley are also involved. Dig it!

HERCULES, PRISONER OF EVIL (1964) - musclemen Reg Park, in his third appearance as Hercules, battles against a witch who can turn men into werewolves.

HOUSE OF THE BLACK DEATH (aka. **BLOOD OF THE MAN DEVIL/NIGHT OF THE BEAST**) (1965) - a very rare pic from co-director's Harold Daniels and Reginald Le Borg starring Chaney Jr. and John Carradine. The story mainly concerns witches but there is a werewolf in it.

ORGY OF THE DEAD (1965) - an Ed Wood Jr. horror/nudie cutie that features a werewolf and a very wild plot!

EL CHARRO DE LAS CALAVERAS (1966) - you guessed it, another Mexican tale and, again, I have no details of the plot, etc.

DR. TERROR'S GALLERY OF HORRORS (aka. **THE BLOOD SUCKERS/RETURN FROM THE PAST**) (1967) - low budget anthology pic features a tale about werewolves. Directed by David L. Hewitt and starring John Carradine and Lon Chaney Jr.

THE MARK OF THE WOLFMAN (aka. **LA MARCA DEL HOMBRE LOBO/FRANKENSTEIN'S BLOODY TERROR**) (1967) - Paul Naschy's first outing as Count Waldemar Daminsky in this Spanish story of lycanthropy and vampirism. Quite a few versions of this around with several running times - check out the original if you can.

THE WOLF FOREST (aka. **EL BOSQUE DEL LOBO**) (1968) - another Spanish flick (sans Naschy) that only just gets a mention here because the tale involves a peddler who lures women into the woods and kills them - the locals suspect him of being a werewolf.

NIGHTS OF THE WEREWOLF (aka. **LAS NOCHES DEL HOMBRE LOBO**) (1968) - a sequel to **THE MARK OF THE WOLFMAN** with Naschy enlisting the help of a wacky scientist, but the doc uses the werewolf for his own gain.

DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN (aka. **EL HOMBRE QUE VINO DE UMMO/ASSIGNMENT TERROR/LOS MONSTROUS DEL TERROR**) (1969) - Naschy again, this time teamed up with Michael Rennie doing a "Klattu Barada Nikto" impression. Rennie plans to take over the Earth and wants to recruit all the great monsters, Dracula, a Mummy, Frankenstein's Monster and, of course, a werewolf - crazy, crazy fun!

SANTO AND THE BLUE DEMON VS. THE MONSTERS (aka. **SANTO Y BLUE DEMON CONTRA LOS MONSTROUS**) (1969) - a Mexican wrestling team-up (the duo's third picture together) in which they slug it out with a host of famous creatures, including El Hombre Lobo, the wolfman! **DRACULA (THE DIRTY OLD MAN)** (1969) - an adults only sex/comedy/horror picture that involves the Count kidnapping virgins - somehow a werewolf also appears.

L'ENFANT SAUVAGE (aka. **THE WILD CHILD**) (1969) - a Truffaut directed piece about a scientist that tames and studies a boy who has been living wild in the forest.

THE MALTESE BIPPY (1969) - sixties hip comedy duo Rowan & Martin starred in this lame pic that



Oliver Reed gets blasted in the belfry in Hammer's **THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF**

featured werewolves and haunted houses.

TORRE NG DIABLO (1969) - a Phillipino film that had actor Rodolfo Garcia as a wolfman.

MAD MONSTER PARTY (1969) - stop-motion puppet comedy for kids which features all the classic monsters. Karloff provided the voice for the Baron Frankenstein character.

SHADOW OF THE WEREWOLF (aka. **LA NOCHE DE WALPURGIS/THE WEREWOLF VS. THE VAMPIRE WOMAN/BLOOD MOON/THE WEREWOLF'S SHADOW/NACHT DER VAMPIRE**) (1970) - it's that Naschy fellow again as Count Waldemar, revived once more and locked into battle with a vampire countess - highly enjoyable.

THE BEAR (1970) - Polish movie based on folklore about a part man/part bear.

DOCTOR JEKYLL AND THE WEREWOLF (aka. **DR. JEKYLL Y EL HOMBRE LOBO**) (1971) - yep, that's right, Naschy's back! A wild plot that has everybody's favourite Spanish lycanthrope mixed up with Robert Louis Stevenson's creation!

THE FURY OF THE WOLFMAN (aka. **LA FURIA DEL HOMBRE LOBO**) (1971) - this time Naschy gets muddled up with a female doc who persuades him to put the bite on a loved one in the hope of creating the perfect lupine couple!

THE WEREWOLF (aka. **O HOMEM LOBO**) (1971) - a Brazilian cheapie in which fatherly neglect is looked at as the main cause for a young boy's wolfish ways - uninspiring stuff.

WEREWOLVES ON WHEELS (1971) - Hell's Angels get mixed up with devil worshippers which leads to one of their number becoming a werewolf. Great title, crap movie.

SANTO AND THE BLUE DEMON VS. DRACULA AND THE WOLFMAN (aka. **SANTO Y BLUE DEMON CONTRA DRACULA Y EL HOMBRE LOBO**) (1971) - another Mexican wrestling-horrorbash in which our masked heroes battle it out with an army of wolfmen and vampires!

THE RATS ARE COMING! THE WEREWOLVES ARE HERE! (1972) - mega-low-budget Andy Milligan opus - nuff said!

TWILIGHT PEOPLE (1972) - an Eddie Romero/John Ashley team-up made in the Philippines about yet another mad scientist who creates a whole troop of beast people, including a wolf-woman.

MOON OF THE WOLF (1972) - a Daniel Petrie TV

movie in which the creature pits his wits against a Louisiana sheriff - starring David Janssen and Bradford Dillman.

DRACULA, PRISONER OF FRANKENSTEIN (aka. **DRACULA C O N T R A FRANKENSTEIN/DRACULA PRISONNIER DE FRANKENSTEIN/DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN/SATANA CONTRA DR. EXORTIO**) (1972) - a bizarre Jess Franco Spanish/French co-

production with hardly any dialogue and some very cheapo monster make-ups - in spite of the title a werewolf does appear for a few moments!

SANTO VS. THE SHE-WOLVES (aka. **SANTO CONTRA LAS LOBAS**) (1972) - directed by Alfredo B. Crevanna, Santo deals with a pack of wolf-cultists in yet another helping of Mexican wrestling/horror fun!

SUPERBEAST (1972) - awful Philippino yarn in which a wacky scientist turns criminals into man-beasts.

THE BOY WHO CRIED WEREWOLF (1973) - as the title suggests, this pic is about a young boy who sees a werewolf but nobody will believe him. The creature is played by Kerwin (**THE 7TH VOYAGE OF SINBAD**) Matthews. Not a bad film but the make-up could have been more imaginative.

CURSE OF THE DEVIL (aka. **EL RETORNO DE WALPURGIS/BLACK HARVEST OF COUNTESS DRACULA**) (1973) - Naschy again, in his seventh outing! A countess is burned at the stake and places a curse on the family of the local witch-hunter, time shoots forward and he is then 'poisoned' with a lycanthropic virus (!). You know the rest! Good stuff.

BLOOD (1973) - Andy Milligan cheapie featuring a werewolf and some carnivorous plants!

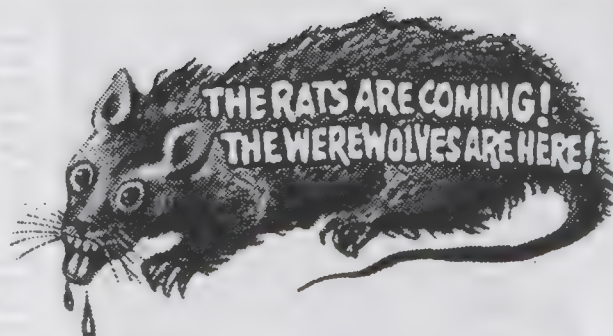
THE WEREWOLF OF WASHINGTON (1973) - an inept vehicle designed to capitalize on the Watergate affair wherein a Presidential aide is infected with the disease and roams the Whitehouse. A couple of amusing scenes and a lively performance from Dean Stockwell as the werewolf, but, ultimately, a fairly unmemorable effort. This does have a bit of a following though, so what do I know?

THE BEAST MUST DIE (1974) - an Amicus production that actually pauses and asks the viewer to make up his/her mind as to who in the cast is the werewolf in question! Calvin Lockheart plays a wealthy mansion owner who entices a group of guests into his abode in an attempt at proving that one of them is a werewolf (all of the guests have been connected with mysterious deaths). Actual wolves are shown rather than the traditional men-in-make-up. A good cast, most notably Peter Cushing and Charles Gray, and a fair attempt at doing something different with the legend.

THE BEAST (THE BEAST IN HEAT/DEATH'S ECSTASY) (1974) - a variation from France on the **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST** theme featuring Sirpa Lane getting it on with a beast-man, who eventually dies of too much sex!

O LOBISOMEM (1974) - a Brazilian pic from Elyseu Visconti Cavalleiro in which a millionaire becomes a werewolf and rules over evil deep in a forest.

SCREAM OF THE WOLF (1974)



- another TV movie, this time combining the talents of director Dan Curtis and master writer Richard Matheson. The plot concerns a series of "wolf killings" with a twist ending.

QUEM TEM MEDO DE LOBISOMEM (1974) - another werewolf-themed horror from Brazil, this one was directed by and starred Reginaldo Faria.

THE LEGEND OF THE WEREWOLF (1974/5) - in this endearing tale we learn of the discovery of a wolf-boy captured and displayed in a travelling sideshow until he grows up, then leaves for a job at a Paris zoo. When he discovers that his girlfriend is a prostitute he turns lupine and causes carnage amongst the local inhabitants. He then has the police pathologist (expertly played by Peter Cushing) hot on his heels. A simple yet effective traditional horror story filmed in the Hammer style. The creature make-up, sported by David Rintoul, is almost identical to that worn by Oliver Reed in **CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF**.

THE WEREWOLF AND THE YETI (aka. **LA MALDICION DE LA BESTIA/NIGHT OF THE HOWLING BEAST/HALL OF THE MOUNTAIN KING**) (1975) - a sequel to Naschy's **CURSE OF THE DEVIL**. An interesting film that depicts Waldemar on an expedition to Tibet in search of the infamous Yeti. Whilst in a cave our 'hero' (!) gets seduced by a

To destroy the Monster,
was to destroy the
one she loved!!



DR. JEKYLL AND THE WEREWOLF

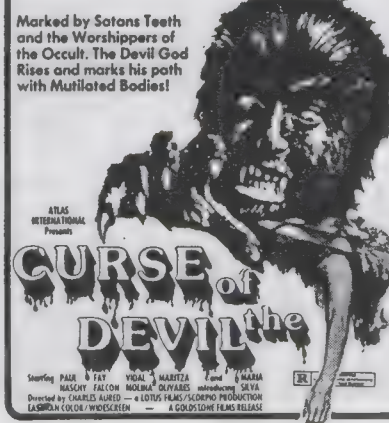
A Briteway Associates Film Presentation
Released by International Cine Film Corp.



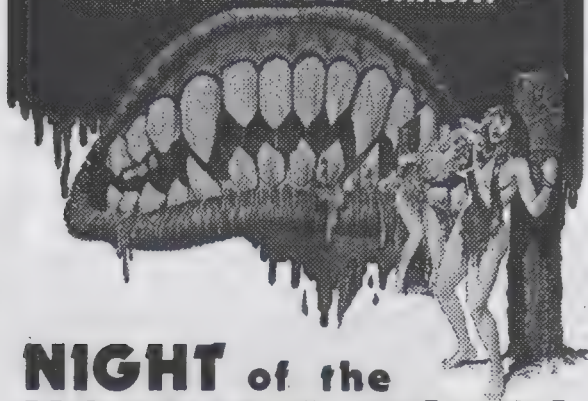
Could she?
Could you?



Prepare Yourself for
The HORROR of **PSYCHO!**
The TERROR of **EXORCIST!**



**You feel your Heart POUNDING,
You know It's out there,
You can't SCREAM,
NOW IT'S AT YOUR THROAT -**



NIGHT of the HOWLING BEAST

starring PAUL NASCHY • GRACE MILLS • GIL VIDAL SILVIA SOLAR • LOUIS INDUNI
in GEVACOLOR a CONSTELLATION FILMS INC. release

couple of women and gets bitten... needless to say, he transforms once more and goes through a series of bizarre and bloody adventures until he comes face-to-face with the Yeti. This film usually crops up on a gorehound's want-to-see list.

WEREWOLF OF WOODSTOCK (1975) - set shortly after the concert a farmer, who complains about all the hippies, gets struck by lightning and as a result becomes a werewolf - a TV movie starring Michael Parks shown as part of the 'Wide World of Mystery' series.

WEREWOLF WOMAN (aka. **LA LUPA MANNERA/ DAUGHTER OF A WEREWOLF/LEGEND OF THE WOLF WOMAN**) (1976) - an Italian outing lavishing on the sexual and bloody antics of Annik Borel. Daft and repellent, especially Miss Borel's fake-fur breasts!

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST (1976) - TV movie version starring an unlikely Beast, George C. Scott, who was nominated for an Emmy award for his performance.

THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU (1977) - a plodding remake of 1932's **ISLAND OF LOST SOULS** with Burt Lancaster taking over the Charles Laughton pivotal role. Worth mentioning for the charms of Barbara Carrera and for the effective 'manimal' make-up.

DEATH MOON (1978) - TV movie starring Robert Foxworth as a werewolf.

WOLFMAN (1979) - a low-budgeter from North Carolina's Earl Owensby who also takes the lead. A man inherits the family curse when his father dies - murder and mayhem ensue as he searches for a cure.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST (1979) - yet another remake, this time from Czechoslovakia.

THE HOWLING (1980) - thought by many to be the finest werewolf movie around and successful enough to produce a glut of unimaginatively titled sequel. Directed with flair by Joe Dante, the story concerns the hunt for a vicious killer and ends with the heroine involved with an entire colony of lycanthropes. The Rob Bottin transformation make-up is truly excellent and helped to revive the genre. Nasty in places with a touch of humour (the latter I could've done without). Stars Dee Wallace, Patrick Macnee and John Carradine. Great visuals and lots of cameos.

THE CRAVING (aka **EL RETORNO DEL HOMBRE LOBO**) (1980) - Naschy dons the hair once again and meets up with Liz Bathroy in the Carpathian mountains.

CRY WOLF! (1980) - a British short that starred Paul Maxwell as a werewolf.

ALTERED STATES (1980) - featured an effective man into wolf/caveman transformation but was really about regression rather than an accursed disease.

THE MONSTER CLUB (1980) - a truly disastrous attempt at making a juvenile horror film - only

mentioned here because of the 'werewolves' seen partying at the club of the title!

AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON (1981) - A modern day classic of the horror genre and one of the few examples that actually makes horror and comedy work! A superb central performance by David Naughton as one of a pair of American hitch-hikers making their way through Europe. Whilst out on the 'moors' they get attacked by a werewolf, one dies, and comes back as a zombie, and the other is injured but suffers the curse of the full-moon. Rick Baker's Oscar-winning make-up fx are breathtaking as is John Landis' direction - if you only ever see one werewolf film, then make it this one!

WOLFEN (1981) - a very unusual film about killer wolves that was a whole decade ahead of its time - a sort of green, ecological exercise in terror! Based on the book by Whitley

Strieber, the plot concerns a series of murders in New York's Bronx area. Detective Albert Finney is on hand to investigate and, with the aid of an American Indian and a helpful pathologist, uncovers a bizarre, but plausible, story about packs of super-intelligent wolves, an ancient race, that have lived among us for years preying on the city low-life that no-one will miss. Superb imagery and intelligent direction from Michael Wadleigh - this pic gets better with each viewing.

FULL MOON HIGH (1982) - a satiric tale directed by low-budget king Larry Cohen. Adam Arkin plays the wolfman who has to suffer the curse after being bitten in Rumania on a trip with his father...

CAT PEOPLE (1982) - I know it's not a wolfish picture, but the transformation effects from man/ woman into beast are outstanding and as such it deserved a mention!! **NAKED WEREWOLF WOMAN** (aka. **WEREWOLF WOMAN**) (1982/3) - this title, unknown to me, comes courtesy of Elliot's Video Guide, "Obscure and uninteresting sex film with some horror elements". It starred Tina Carraro.

THE BEAST AND THE MAGIC SWORD (aka. **LA BESTIA Y LA ESPADA MAGICA**) (1983) - Naschy teamed up with the Japanese for his next film as the werewolf Waldemar Daminsky. The story commences in Japan and gradually moves across Europe with Naschy up to his usual wolfish antics until getting dispatched by a silver sword.

THE COMPANY OF WOLVES (1984) - an exquisite British fairy-tale that poaches on the fable of Little Red Riding Hood and that all men are really wolves in human clothing! The plot concerns the sexual awakening of a young girl. Marvellous studio-bound sets and transformation shots give this film a cure-all dream-like quality.

FREAKY FAIRY TALES (aka. **DEADTIME STORIES**) (1985) - fairy-tales for grown ups - one segment is based on Little Red Riding Hood and poses the wolf as



Adam Arkin in Larry Cohen's **FULL MOON HIGH**

a junkie and he in turn develops into a wolf-man. **THE ADVENTURES OF A TWO-MINUTE WEREWOLF** (1985) - a fifty minute US TV pic (screened in two parts - and shown on satellite TV's Children's Channel in May 1992) about a horror film fanatic kid who changes into a werewolf and then

**A TRUE STORY SO BRUTAL
AND HORRIFYING
it was kept from the public
for over a century!**



THE LEGEND OF THE... WOLF WOMAN

©1977 DIMENSION PICTURES INC

VENNY WOOLNER Presentation starring ANNE BOREL and FRED STAFFORD
Screenplay by HOWARD ROSS Directed by R.D. SILVER Produced by MICKEY ZIDUC



ADULTS ONLY
PARENTS STRONGLY CAUTIONED



helps to solve a crime.

TEEN WOLF (1985) - a semi-humorous look at lycanthropy and its effects on an American teenager (Michael J. Fox).

HOWLING II (aka. **STIRBA - WEREWOLF BITCH/ YOUR SISTER IS A WEREWOLF**) (1985) - Christopher Lee is the hunter locked into battle with Sybil Danning's sexually charged werewolf-bitch. A dire non-follow-up!

FRIGHT NIGHT (1985) - really a vampire movie but it does feature an excellent werewolf played by Stephen Geoffreys.

SILVER BULLET (1985) - an exciting Stephen King adaptation starring Gary Busey, Corey Haim and Everett McGill and a whole pack of werewolves! Only thing that let it down was the poor make-up.

MONSTER DOG (1986) - rock star Alice Cooper plays a... rock star who is believed to be a werewolf - the title says it all!

THE MONSTER SQUAD (1987) - director Fred Dekker

pays homage to monster movies of yesteryear with all the old classic monsters mixing it up with some horror-loving kids.

HOWLING III: THE MARSUPIALS (1987) - as the title suggest this third outing is set in Australia with some werewolves going walkabout.

TEEN WOLF TOO (1987) - lame follow-up minus Michael J. Fox, this one concentrates on his cousin.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST (1987) - this version starred Rebecca DeMornay and John Savage... you know the story.

HOWL OF THE DEVIL (aka. **EL AUULLIDO DEL DIABLO**) (1987) - Naschy's attempt at doing it all as he directs and stars as ten different monsters, including Rasputin, Fu-Manchu, The Phantom, etc., and, naturally, a werewolf!

RED RIDING HOOD (1987) - a magical tale based on the classic Brother's Grimm fairy story taken a few stages further with the inclusion of werewolves and sorcerers, etc. This Cannon produced pic starred Craig T. Nelson, Isabella Rossellini and Amelia Shankley.

LONE WOLF (1988) - a few neat effects are all that this one has to recommend it with this grade-Z effort from director John Callas in which a group of kids use a computer to track a werewolf.

HOWLING IV: THE ORIGINAL NIGHTMARE (1988) - not that original and the only nightmare is having to sit through it!

WAXWORK (1988) - superb anthology pic centered around wacky David Warner's 'Waxworks'. The werewolf segment stars John Rhys-Davies and **TWIN PEAKS'** Dana Ashbrook and boasts a neat transformation and lots of head-splitting gruel!

FRIGHT NIGHT PART 2 (1988) - a great sequel to the exciting original and, as before, this vampire pic features a werewolf.

MY MOM'S A WEREWOLF (1989) - John Saxon infects a neglected housewife with the lycanthropic bug, resulting in an unfunny comedy - directed by Michael Fischel.

HOWLING V: THE RE-BIRTH (1989) - Even worse than **PART IV**, only the locations are of interest - the plot is lifted straight from Amicus' **THE BEAST MUST DIE**.

CURSE OF THE QUEERWOLF (1989) - great title, and according to Fangoria it's "a camp comedy

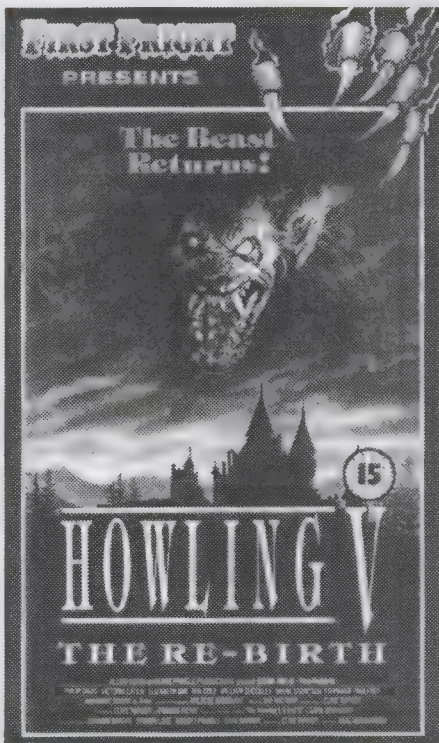
about an average macho guy bitten by the 'woman' he's just picked up, thus suffering gender confusion and a penchant for pink!" I haven't seen it so I can't really comment!

PHANTOMS (aka. **MERIDIAN**) (1990) - another erotic re-working of **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST**, this one was from Charles Band and starred **TWIN PEAKS'** Sherilyn Fenn. The creature make-up looked quite good.

HOWLING VI: THE FREAKS (1990) - Best of the sequels. A madcap monster-bash of old, populated by a host of creatures and weird people - good fun! **Stephen King's IT** (1990) - not a werewolf movie but the shape-shifting creature of the title is seen as one in an **I WAS A TEENAGE WEREWOLF** sequence.

NIGHT SHADOW (1990) - small-town USA gets plagued by werewolves.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST (1991) - stunning Disney Oscar-nominated (for Best Picture no less!) full length musical cartoon.



The sell-through sleeve for **HOWLING V**

Numerous **Dracula** movies have also depicted wolfish transformations (including, most spectacularly, the new Francis Coppola adaptation), but I felt that to include these films in this article would cross the piece completely over to vampire territory and decided to reference them here.

As well as the TV movies listed, werewolves and wolfmen have appeared on numerous TV shows, again this is not complete:- **DARK SHADOWS**, the long-running horror/soap had a werewolf in it; **THE MUNSTERS**, of course, had its very own resident

wolf-boy in the shape of little Eddie Munster (there also exists an un-aired 15 minute pilot which shows several different Munster characters and the Eddie part was called Happy Derman!); **KOLCHAK: THE NIGHT STALKER** had a werewolf episode; **ROUTE 66** did a Halloween Special in which Karloff, Chaney Jnr and Lorrer reprised some of the roles that made them famous, naturally, Chaney played a wolf-man; **VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA** also got in on the act with a story called simply 'Werewolf' in which some of the crew members of the Seaview get turned into werewolves! In 1965 the Sally Field series **GIDGET** featured a werewolf in an episode called 'A Hard Day's Night'; The BBC's **THE SUPERNATURAL** had a story called 'Werewolf Reunion' which featured Sandor Eles as a lycanthrope; Even those sixties mopheads **THE MONKEES** had a wolfman in an episode from their cult show!; **LUCAN** was an innovative series about a wolf-boy/man played to the **INCREDIBLE HULK** formula, in which the hero was moved from locale to locale. Kevin Brophy was the title character (this series may have been inspired by Truffaut's **L'ENFANT SAUVAGE**); **MANIMAL**, starring Simon Macorkindale, featured some neat effects; **HAMMER HOUSE OF HORROR** from 1980 had a story called 'Children of the Full Moon' which involved some stranded motorists plagued by dreams about werewolves; **WEREWOLF** was a fairly good series, again stuck with the wandering title

character formula. A good werewolf was out to destroy an old evil one!; **TEEN WOLF** spawned a cartoon and even Scoobie Doo turned up with a full length cartoon entitled **SCOOBIE DOO AND THE RELUCTANT WEREWOLF** in which the unfortunately named 'Shaggy' becomes transformed into a wimpy-wolfman; **TALES FROM THE DARKSIDE** had a Tom Savini directed episode entitled 'Family Reunion' about a family of werewolves and another story called 'The Circus' which featured an Ed French created werewolf; **MONSTERS** naturally covered the genre with instalments called 'Werewolf of Hollywood' and the amusing 'One Wolf's Family'; The awful **SUPERBOY** series had a werewolf episode; **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST** starred Ron Perlman and Linda Hamilton and has gone on to be something of a cult series, but the make-up is that of a lion-man rather than a wolf; **TALES FROM THE CRYPT** also got in on the act with a werewolf being featured in a story called 'The Secret' and **LOVE AND CURSES** (aka. **SHE-WOLF OF LONDON**) show-casing a female werewolf in convincing make-up (at the time of writing this series has not been seen in the UK).

Pop videos have also contributed to the genre with the most famous being Michael Jackson's groundbreaking **THRILLER** which changed the shape of vids to come with its style and high production values - it had it all; Rick Baker effects, zombies, a werewolf transformation scene and even Vincent Price rapping! John Landis directed and the retail video **THE MAKING OF MICHAEL JACKSON'S THRILLER** went on to become one of the all-time best sellers! Bad boy(!) rocker, Ozzy Osbourne, also had a turn at being made up as a werewolf in his **BARK AT THE MOON** video and metal boys, Iron Maiden, used old werewolf footage for their **NUMBER OF THE BEAST** track.

Back to the film world, and in production we have none other than Jack Nicholson and Michelle Pfeiffer starring in **WOLF** for director Mike Nichols and **MAD AT THE MOON** starring Mary Stuart Masterson, directed by Martin Donovan, Rod Taylor's **TEEN WOLF 666** (oh dear!) and Sam Arkoff re-making **I WAS A TEENAGE WEREWOLF**. And there you have it - I'd really like to hear from anyone who has anything to add to this little lot. So keep watching the moon and remember to check for hairs on the palms of your hands, etc. How-w-w-I-I-I!



Charlie Band's **PHANTOMS**



Ed Naha

Those of you who bought issue three of FANTASYNOPSIS (and it's too late now if you didn't because they've all gone!) may remember the interview with Ed Naha, the novelist and scriptwriter of *HONEY*, *I SHRUNK THE KIDS*, *TROLL* and *DOLLS*; etc. Well, back then we ran out of space for his lengthy and interesting Top Ten, so here it is in all its glory...

1. THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1935) - Directed by James Whale.

"Probably the best of the original Universal series, this movie had *everything* going for it. Mood. Atmosphere. Excellent direction, writing and acting. An amazingly literate look at life and longing. Karloff, who was a very underrated actor, positively *shines* in this film as the man-made creature who wants nothing more than to be 'whole'. To have a mate. His sense of longing is truly heart-breaking. The supporting cast is nothing short of marvellous. I still watch this one on tape and *never* find it dated."

2. KING KONG (1933) - Directed by Ernest B. Schoedsack.

"The grand-daddy of all the 'monster on the loose' films and, in my opinion, the greatest; stressing, in an odd way, the dangers of man intruding on a self-contained world and fouling up the balance of nature. Willis O'Brien's special effects are quite amazing and *still* hold up; whether you view this on a small or large screen. For a big story, the mood here is very claustrophobic with night-time scenes and fog-enshrouded Kong encounters causing goosebumps a-plenty. Tremendous score. Non-stop action."

3. THE TIME MACHINE (1960) - Directed by George Pal.

"Probably producer George Pal's finest film (and that's saying a *lot*), this movie had everything: a logical plot, dazzling effects and a wonderful sense of heart. I believe it's one of the few truly excellent movie adaptations of a science-fiction novel. A cautionary tale but one that ends on an upbeat, hopeful note. Rod Taylor makes for a believable time-traveller and Alan Young is the 'best' best friend anyone could hope for. Bill Tuttle's Morlock make-up is appropriately creepy as well."

4. THE DEVIL DOLL (1936) - Directed by Tod Browning.

"A surprisingly 'liberal' adaptation of A. Merritt's novel 'Burn, Witch, Burn', this is a nifty little tale of vengeance with a scientific/supernatural twist. Tod Browning had a knack for picking creepy premises for his movies (*FREAKS*, *MARK OF THE VAMPIRE*) and this film offers a ruined banker using tiny, artificially created people to kill off his rich, corrupt enemies. A schmaltzy sub-plot tends to bog things down a tad but, whenever there's a lull, Lionel Barrymore jumps into the picture and raises holy hell, both as the vengeful banker and the female dollmaker (the banker in a hoot of a disguise)."

5. MYSTERIOUS ISLAND (1961) - Directed by Cy Endfield.

"Ray Harryhausen meets Jules Verne in this eye-popping, stop-motion animation extravaganza. A group of people are marooned on an island populated by Captain Nemo and a batch of conniving critters. If you can ignore Percy Herbert's on-again/off-again Southern accent and concentrate on the spills and chills, you're in for a roller-coaster ride... and the giant crab sequence is not to be missed."

6. THE ISLAND OF LOST SOULS (1932) - Directed by Eric C. Kenton.

"A flawed but truly atmospheric adaptation of Wells' novel 'The Island of Dr. Moreau', this film boasts a blissfully deranged performance by Charles Laughton as Moreau; a cheerful chap who decides to surgically create human beings from animals in his operating chamber; known to the litter as 'The House of Pain'. Phillip Wylie's screenplay is, for the most part, on target and the scenes with the animal slaves are chilling. Bela Lugosi does a brief, but creepy, turn as the Sayer of the Law."

7. THE MAN WHO COULD WORK MIRACLES (1937) - Directed by Lothar Mendes.

"I just love this movie, based on a screenplay by H.G. Wells. Roland Young is delightful as a timid soul who, through a whim of one of the gods, is given the power to make all his wishes come true... well, *almost* all. Satirical without being nasty, whimsical without being juvenile, the movie is the perfect blend of fantasy and editorializing; tossing quite a few zingers at society and the shallowness of humanity."

8. THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN (1957) - Directed by Jack Arnold.

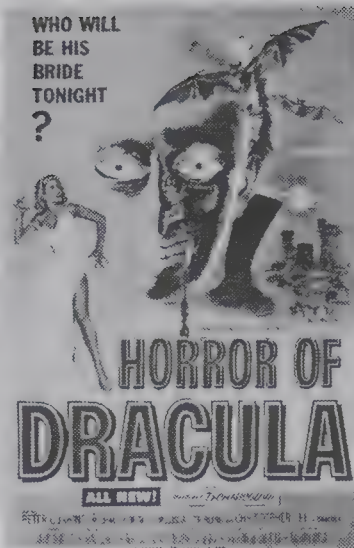
"This little gem (no pun intended) came out during a period when people were flocking to see drive-in fare like *INVASION OF THE SAUCER MEN* and *I WAS A TEENAGE WHATEVER*... Richard Matheson's cautionary tale finds ordinary man Scott Carey shrinking a tad every day. Aside from the thrills you would expect from a movie of this type (little guy vs. big spider, etc.), the beautifully realised script tries to define exactly what 'makes' a man. Carey's ultimate, transcendental fate is both dramatic and inspiring. Another one of my prized tapes."

9. DRACULA (aka. THE HORROR OF DRACULA) (1958) - Directed by Terence Fisher.

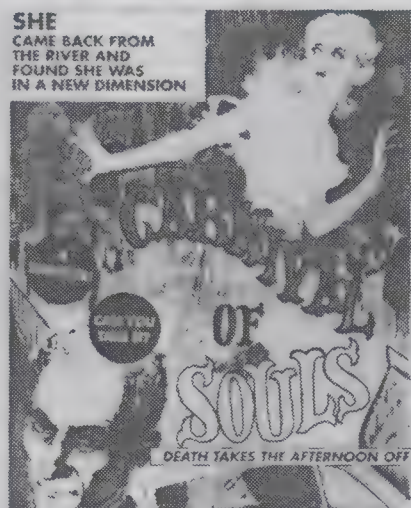
"I saw this as a lad and *still* love it. Peter Cushing, one of my favourite actors, is the best Van Helsing in screen history: a strong, dedicated fighter of evil. Christopher Lee makes for a stately Dracula. Hammer's eye-popping colour treatment of the Bram Stoker novel is true, in spirit, to the book; the accent shifting from mood to action nicely. I can't say enough about Cushing's performance but, then again, I've never seen him give a *bad* performance in *any* movie, no matter how flimsy a script he worked from. His presence as Van Helsing gives this movie backbone and his final battle with the evil Count in the castle library is a real hair-raiser."

10. CARNIVAL OF SOULS (1962) - Directed by Herk Harvey.

"I think I was one of nine people who saw this movie when it was released and still think about it. Similar in eerie, black and white tone to George Romero's later *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD* but far more imaginative and using no kayro syrup, *CARNIVAL* opens with a young church organist surviving a soggy car crash on a strange road. Leaving her car in the drink, she makes her way to a nearby town where she is terrified by weird dreams, weirder apparitions and, all in all, a lot of pastey-faced geeks. This one teeters on the brink of total surrealism as the woman's life becomes increasingly aberrated with strange faces and shapes invading her world more and more frequently. The ending is a real kicker."



The US poster for Hammer's DRACULA



"Eerily atmospheric chiller returns to claim its place as a classic" *Kobling Stone Magazine*

How many people do you know who actually saw this when it opened?

Ed Naha



SAPPHIRE & STEEL

MARK MURTON PUTS THIS QUITE UNIQUE SHOW UNDER THE FANTASYNOOPSIS MICROSCOPE

'ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS'

"All irregularities will be handled by the forces controlling each dimension. Transuranic heavy elements may not be used where there is life. Medium atomic weights are available: Gold, Lead, Copper, Jet, Diamond, Radium, Sapphire, Silver and Steel. Sapphire and Steel have been assigned."

With these words, on 10th July, 1979, viewers were introduced to the eponymous heroes of ATV's new,

twice-weekly, half-hour science-fiction adventure series; a show unlike almost anything attempted before by primetime television.

Despite only running for 34 episodes over three years, comprising just six stories, **SAPPHIRE AND STEEL** gained a loyal cult following and is fondly remembered by all of those who appreciate genuinely original and challenging telefantasy.

SAPPHIRE AND STEEL was created by

experienced TV writer Peter J. Hammond whose extensive list of credits included contributions to just about every police series on TV from **Z CARS** and **NEW SCOTLAND YARD** to **THE SWEENEY** and **TARGET** (and later **THE GENTLE TOUCH** and **THE BILL**), plus such series as **SPY TRAP** and **HAZELL** and, perhaps more significantly, the children's fantasy series **ACE OF WANDS** for which he provided four stories.

Hammond first came up with the idea for the show while watching George Pal's version of H.G. Wells' **THE TIME MACHINE** with his children and this set him thinking about how time travel is treated in films and television. He then married this to his interest in unexplained mysteries to create a unique new concept, as he told **LOOK-IN** in 1979, "I love the inexplicable - the tale of the Marie Celeste; the riddle of the Bermuda Triangle. That's why I wrote **SAPPHIRE AND STEEL**. There have been plenty of stories of characters who travel in time, but none where time itself actually does the travelling. I think this angle gives our series a truly original touch, and gets it away from the usual run-of-the-mill stuff, loaded with dinosaurs from the past or silver-clad androids from the future. With **SAPPHIRE AND STEEL**, viewers are able to get the feeling that it could happen to them. That at any given second they could fall prey to the dark side of time and be snatched into an existence of baffling horror beyond the reach of normal help."

Having written a treatment for the opening six-part story, Hammond first approached Thames with the

SEASON ONE: STORY ONE (6 EPISODES) - SYNOPSIS

Teenager Rob Jardine sits doing his homework in the kitchen of the isolated old house where he lives with his parents and younger sister, Helen. Upstairs his parents read bedtime nursery rhymes to Helen. One by one all the docks in the house wind down and when Rob goes to tell his parents he finds they have disappeared leaving him and Helen alone in the house. He goes to phone for the local policeman and soon after his return two strangers arrive at the door - Sapphire and Steel. They seem to know what is happening and using Helen's book of nursery rhymes they are able to conjure up strange images from the past. Explaining that there is a tear in the corridor of Time allowing these images in and something to snatch their parents out, Sapphire and Steel order the children to keep out of the room but Helen returns and once more calls up bizarre images by reciting a rhyme. To prevent the tear in Time from encroaching further into the house Steel boards up the door to Helen's attic bedroom. The policeman summoned by Rob duly arrives and while Sapphire creates a Time loop to convince Rob not to interfere, Steel is able to assure the policeman that all is well and he leaves. Steel locates the "youngest" room in the house and has it emptied. Meanwhile Rob is lured to the landing by the sound of his mother's voice and reciting another rhyme he calls up two Cromwellian soldiers who seem to break down the door.

A mysterious circle of light appears from under the still boarded-up door and moves unseen down the stairs. Sapphire and Steel accompany Rob to the landing and are able to conjure up the image of the soldiers again but Steel informs Rob that they are not part of the trouble affecting the house. As they make their way back downstairs a picture on the wall glows as it absorbs the circle of light from the bedroom. Suddenly Sapphire disappears. Steel is still able to communicate telepathically with her and soon locates her in the picture. Sapphire tries to take Time back to just before she disappeared but is unable to. Leaving Rob and Helen talking to Sapphire, Steel goes to work on a plan of his own. Two more lights emerge from under the bedroom door and as the spectres of the soldiers appear again they are absorbed by the lights and taken into the picture holding Sapphire. Inside the house in the picture Sapphire hears their approach and senses she is in terrible danger. Steel returns and instructing the children not to touch him reduces his body temperature to near absolute zero and

freezes the picture, freeing Sapphire.

The soldiers are also freed and they now attack Sapphire so Steel freezes them too and they recede. With the light from the picture temporarily immobilised they take the opportunity to transfer it to the Jardine's freezer, now moved to the room Steel cleared earlier, to stop it regaining its heat. Safe for the moment, Steel rests by the kitchen fire. Another element, Lead, now arrives to help on this difficult case, so while Steel, Lead and Rob collect up all the books and pictures in the house Sapphire and Helen set about burning them in the kitchen stove. As Sapphire burns a book of rhymes the page she has just torn out is suddenly wrenched from her hand by an unseen force and as a disembodied voice recites the rhyme on the page - "When the North Wind Blows" - pandemonium erupts with bizarre images and strange voices filling the air while various objects are hurled about by the strong wind gusting through the house. Eventually Sapphire catches the page and burns it, causing the house to settle down once more. As they tidy up the debris left by this incident Rob finds himself lured to the room where the frozen light is and once there he encounters his father who informs him that Sapphire and Steel are the real enemies and that he and Rob's mother have been hiding. To further convince him he offers to take Rob to see his mother in the cellar where she is hiding.

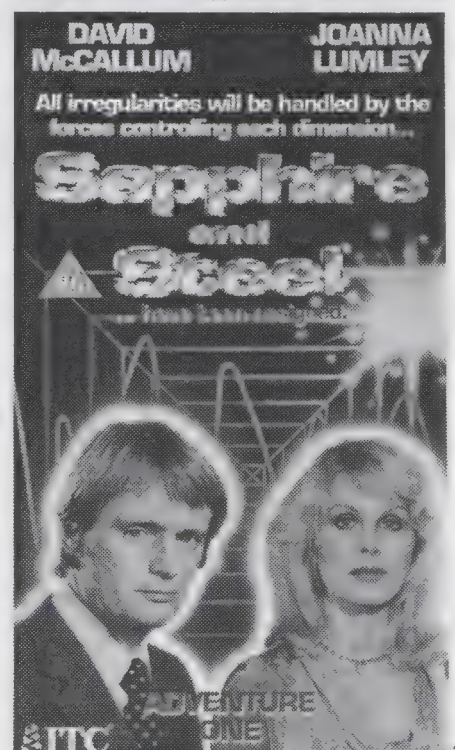
In the cellar one of the circles of light assumes the form of Rob's mother but the disguise slips and Rob realises he has been duped. But it is too late and he is suddenly transported by the two lights posing as his mother and father back to 1736 when the foundations for the house were laid. Sapphire, Steel, Lead and Helen now arrive in the cellar. Steel is able to communicate with Rob and he realises that the force in the house has been hiding its satellites, the lights, in the house's foundation stone. Using Helen reciting nursery rhymes as bait, Steel plans to lure the lights down to the cellar and from here travel back to 1736 and trap the lights in the foundation stone, then destroy it...

CAST

David McCallum (Steel); Joanna Lumley (Sapphire); Steven O'Shea (Rob Jardine); Tamasin Bridge (Helen Jardine); Felicity Harrison (Mother); John Golightly (Father); Ronald Goodale (Countryman); Charles Pemberton (Policeman); Val Pringle (Lead).

Originally broadcast: 10/7/79, 12/7/79, 17/7/79, 19/7/79, 24/7/79, 26/7/79.

152 minutes approx. on video.



The video sleeve for Story One



David McCallum steals himself for another assignment

idea and while they were interested they were unable to take up an option on it as the time-slot they envisioned for it, 5:20 - 5:45pm, just before the early evening news and meant for older children, was already allocated.

The treatment then found its way to David Reid, head of drama at ATV, who was quoted in the series' pre-publicity as saying, "I found it so frightening I couldn't get to sleep." Needless to say Reid was sufficiently impressed to commission **SAPPHIRE AND STEEL** as a series for ATV. With Shaun O'Riordan assigned as producer (and director of the majority of episodes) filming started at ATV's Elstree studios in mid-1978.

Whether ATV intended it as a children's show isn't clear; the prominent part they play in the first story while only appearing in two of the five other stories, and then only in secondary roles, surely confirms that this was Hammond's original intention yet he is quoted in **STARBURST** (#28) as saying, "That would have been awful," going on to say, "It is true that ATV were in two minds at first, whether to put it on in the children's hour or not, but then they decided that as it had an unusual format that did not fit into a specific category, they would hire two television stars and make it an adult programme that could be aimed at all the family."

Either way, as Hammond says, the casting of two major TV stars in the lead roles removed the last vestige of it as a programme for children and they barely get a look in in any of the other stories (there's only one speaking part) while the one in story three rapidly grows to adulthood as if to underline the point.

The casting of the two leads was vital as not only are they on screen for so much of the time but also there are few other characters in each story for viewers to identify with, and the actors selected proved to be ideal.

They were of course David McCallum, who shot to fame in the 1960's in the hugely successful **THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E.** and also appeared (or rather disappeared) in the short-lived TV version of **THE INVISIBLE MAN**, as Steel, and Joanna Lumley, fresh from the world-wide success of **THE NEW AVENGERS**, in the role of Sapphire; leading Hammond, who had no-one specific in mind when he wrote the parts, to comment (**STARBURST** again), "They're perfect. I couldn't imagine anyone being better in them."

The characters of Sapphire and Steel were as obscure and enigmatic as the actors playing them were readily identifiable and much of the mystery and intrigue of the show comes from the lack of information about their origins. Hammond refers to them as "Time detectives" while producer O'Riordan described them as "agents of status quo responsible for ensuring that the natural order of things remain," and the voice-over introduction that accompanies the title sequence, spoken by the half-hidden helmeted figure glimpsed among the titles, is of little help (especially as some of those listed aren't strictly elements), so we are left to piece together the various clues sprinkled throughout the series for

SEASON ONE: STORY TWO (8 EPISODES) - SYNOPSIS

At the disused Dewerton railway station "psychical investigator" George Tully is setting up for another lonely night's ghost watching when he is surprised by the arrival of Sapphire and Steel. Steel is dismissive of Tully's presence and he and Sapphire go to explore the station and deserted hotel annex. Entering one of the rooms, Sapphire's clothes suddenly flash momentarily to summer attire. Out on the platform flowers bloom in previously empty pots and despite the fact that it is late October everything on the platform gives the impression that it is high summer. A disembodied whistling is heard around the station and the image of a WWI soldier appears on the platform. As Steel questions Tully, Sapphire returns to the room where her clothes changed and she now sees four "11"s in the dust on the window. Looking down on the platform she sees the soldier but by the time she and Steel get there he has disappeared. On the platform Sapphire senses strong feelings of "hatred and resentment", then they hear the sound of men singing and marching feet approaching the station. The soldier comes into the station but when Steel tries to question him he refuses to answer and disappears. Steel takes Tully's tapes to listen to and on one of them he discovers voices not previously heard by Tully - a distress call from some men trapped on a WW2 submarine. Sapphire's investigations lead her to conclude that the station is a "recruiting ground for the dead." Out on the platform the soldier is joined by an airman and soon after by four other men. Investigating the room where Sapphire changed Steel also sees the four "11"s on the window and then he too changes, into a pilot on a mission in a plane that is out of control and about to crash. Sapphire finds Steel and takes Time back to before the plane crashes, saving him from the same fate as the airman. Concluding that the soldier is a spokesman for the ghostly group Steel wants to try and communicate with him and he and Tully try to bring him out by singing "Pack Up Your Troubles", the tune the soldier has been whistling. The soldier appears but still won't respond to Steel. Meanwhile Sapphire and Tully find themselves trapped with the ghosts of the doomed submarine crew.

Steel finds them and affects a rescue. Shaken, Tully suggests a more traditional method of contacting the dead, a seance, and Steel agrees offering Sapphire as the medium through which they will communicate. In the station buffet they begin the seance and soon make contact with those who died on the submarine, learning that they weren't sailors but civilian workers on a test run. Steel pushes Sapphire to find the soldier's name and the reason for his resentment but the soldier resists, calling on the Darkness that brought him and the others there to help.

Sapphire assumes the identity of Elanor, the soldier's school teacher, and through her they learn his name, Sam Pearce, and that he died when he was shot 11 minutes after the armistice declared at 11pm on 11th November 1918. Having got the information he wants Steel instructs Tully to bring Sapphire back but he is unable to. All the while a terrible Darkness is seeping into the station, filling every room and forcing the trio to vacate the buffet with Steel and Tully escorting the unconscious Sapphire out onto the platform. As the Darkness recedes they go back inside and leaving Tully to look after Sapphire, Steel goes to explore. Looking down on the platform from an upstairs window Steel sees Sapphire lined up with Pearce and the other ghosts.

ourselves.

Likewise, the extent of their powers is also revealed gradually; both can communicate telepathically (and in story four Sapphire is able to contact the departing Liz while she and Steel are trapped in the picture), but in story five we learn that this is something humans can do too (with a little help) when Felix is appointed "Agent Bronze". Sapphire seems to have

Tully sits with the still unconscious Sapphire, talking quietly to her. Reaching the platform Steel finds it deserted once more, then entering the buffet he finds Sapphire, conscious again and seemingly unaffected by her ordeal. They talk and Sapphire tries to convince him that the ghosts are harmless and just want to be left in peace. Tully continues to talk to the unconscious Sapphire as the Darkness once more starts to encroach upon the station. Steel continues talking to the Sapphire in the buffet and she suddenly changes into summer attire again and attacks him, knocking him to the floor. The soldier and other ghosts now appear and close in on Steel. He tries to run but finds himself entangled on some WWI barbed wire. Tully is given the opportunity to leave but only if he leaves Sapphire where she is. As he leaves he comes across Steel still tangled in the wire. He also encounters the soldier on the stairs leading to the bridge and looking down on the platform he sees the number of ghosts continuing to grow.

Steel awakes to find that the wire has changed to cobwebs and he goes to seek out Sapphire. He finds her and she assures him that she is the real one while the other was created by the Darkness through Pearce but that he and the others have now gone. They realise that Time has shunted forward by twelve days so whatever the Darkness has promised the ghosts has been delivered in that Time. As they search the station Tully appears on the stairs. Sapphire's powers aren't sufficient to take Time back twelve days so instead Steel instructs her to make contact with the Darkness as he wants to offer it a deal if it will take the three of them back those twelve days.

The Darkness makes contact through Sapphire and Steel offers to deal - realising it thrives on the resentment of those who feel they died unjustly he offers it an original source of resentment far stronger than what it currently has, but first the Darkness has to take them back. It agrees and Steel arranges that they should meet where they were twelve days earlier, but then instructs Sapphire to stop them when they have travelled back only eleven days so they are ahead of the Darkness. Steel's plan works and when they arrive they encounter the soldier who tells them that he and the others have been promised the chance to live again, to live new lives, but Steel explains that this can't happen as the Darkness needs their resentment to feed on and so will keep them on a time loop, constantly arriving at the station to create the necessary ill feeling. The soldier says he'd rather go back "for good and all" than face that and Steel says he can arrange it. The Darkness arrives, riled by Steel's trickery and uses its power to horribly disfigure Sapphire, but Steel assures it that nothing has changed and the deal still stands: he wants the Darkness to release all the dead gathered on the platform for the life of someone who still has about five years to live - Tully! - ensuring the necessary resentment, not from Tully but from Time itself as this will damage Time, maybe even effect future history...

CAST

David McCallum (Steel); Joanna Lumley (Sapphire); Gerald James (Tully); Tom Kelly (Soldier (Sam Pearce)); David Woodcock (1st Voice (1st Submariner)); David Cann (2nd Voice (Pilot)).

Originally broadcast: 31/7/79 (repeated 30/10/79), 2/8/79 (repeated 1/11/79), 7/8/79 (repeated 6/11/79), 8/11/79, 13/11/79, 15/11/79, 20/11/79, 22/11/79. Repeats were necessary due to an ITV strike in August.
210 minutes approx. on video.

the greater range of powers, all heralded by her eyes turning a brilliant sapphire blue (although Joanna Lumley reveals in her autobiography that another idea mooted was for her to have a vein throbbing in her temple at the relevant moments), being able to analyse objects to discover their make-up and age, read people's minds to discern their fate, create time loops and even take Time back over short periods.

SEASON TWO: STORY THREE (6 EPISODES) SYNOPSIS

A baby is crying in the top floor flat of an apartment block. Its Mother wakes to tend it, then goes to report to the monitor, seen as a pattern of orange light on the wall, on the progress of Experimental Project ES/5/77. Urban Examination and Observation. Sapphire and Steel arrive on the top floor of the block of flats and gain entry into the top floor flat. It is empty. In the flat the woman, Rothwyn, reports that they haven't received any nutrition for two days, and they wouldn't want to eat 20th Century food. Sapphire senses the presence of three people, a man, a woman and a baby, somewhere above them. In the flat's kitchen, Rothwyn takes a piece of meat from the fridge and she is assailed by images and sounds of a slaughter house. Sapphire declares that, "The attack has started." She and Steel go up on to the roof but see nothing out of the ordinary. Rothwyn goes to wake her husband Eldred and a strong impulse possesses her, trying to make her smother him with a pillow, but she resists it. On the roof Sapphire and Steel discover an invisible wall made of synthetic metal, concluding that it is part of a capsule situated on the roof. Rothwyn tells Eldred that she is unable to get a response from the monitors. Meanwhile the attack continues with pillows, cushions and a fur coat moving of their own accord. Sapphire uses her powers to examine the capsule and deduces that it and the occupants are from about 1500 years in the future - someone is experimenting with Time. Inside the capsule Eldred tries to raise a response from the living room monitor but gets none. At the same time a pillow in the nursery comes to life and floats towards the window. Outside the window Steel is examining one of the invisible walls when he is suddenly attacked by a swan!

Rothwyn briefly sees the image of Sapphire appear in the flat; then, fearing for her child's safety she hurries to the nursery and is horrified to see a swan in the cot. She grapples with it until the hallucination passes and she realises that it is just a pillow. Shocked by the power of what they face, Steel, despite Sapphire's protests, favours setting charges in case it becomes necessary to destroy the block of flats as he fears they "might lose this one." Unnoticed by the capsule's inhabitants a patch of yellow light glows briefly on the wall in the hallway. Rothwyn tells Eldred of her hallucinations and he tries to dispel her fears but she wants to return to their own Time. Sapphire and Steel set about isolating the top floor of the apartment block, Steel using his immense strength to tie a knot in the lift cable to stop it reaching the top floor while Sapphire blocks off the stairs. A voice emanating from the light in the hallway starts to list the different forms of Time and in the nursery a child's hand emerges from the cot. In the Communications Room Eldred tries to make contact with the other study groups - Rural and Provincial - but he gets no reply from either. Sapphire and Steel return to the roof to continue their investigations and Sapphire senses three power sources within the capsule: a tabulator, a communications system and an as yet unidentified third one. In the capsule the child grows to an adult and as the Changeling moves about the nursery it

touches a glass of water. There is a flash of bright light and where the glass once stood there is now only a pile of sand. Sapphire, concerned that the child no longer seems to be in the capsule, now identifies the third power source, but it is not power, not energy, but Time, crystals of Time, and it could be unstable. Steel urges her to try and make contact with the Time source. Sapphire tries and as she discovers that it is only partly a machine she senses a terrible pain from within then, suddenly, she disappears.

Steel returns to the top floor flat as he searches for Sapphire and while there he sees the lift indicator show the lift come up to the top floor, bypassing his sabotage. The lift is empty so he rushes up to the roof where he sees an impish figure. It is Silver, another agent who has arrived to help them. Silver informs Steel that Sapphire isn't in the capsule and also that there are two other capsules but they don't matter anymore. Eldred shows Rothwyn that they have lost contact with the other capsules, causing her to fear that they have returned without them. As they leave the Communications Room they fail to notice Sapphire appear on the monitor in a room in one of the other capsules. Rothwyn and Eldred now find that the baby has gone. Sapphire explores the capsule she is in. Using a light bulb, Silver tests the walls of the top floor flat which he informs Steel has the same layout as the capsules. Rothwyn and Eldred encounter the Changeling in the living room and though they fail to recognise it as their son they find themselves drawn to it. Instructed by the voice from the hallway, the Changeling reaches for them with its right hand and as it touches them there is a flash of bright light. Silver hands Steel a small door-knob and as Steel enters one of the rooms it lights up like a light bulb. Here they are able to make contact with Sapphire and she tells them that the crew in the capsule she is in are all dead.

Sapphire is able to guide Steel around her capsule describing what she finds, including that the crew took their own lives. She also senses there is now only one person in the capsule. With Sapphire in the Communication Room of the capsule she is in and Silver and Steel in the equivalent room in the flat Silver, warning of the dangers should someone turn off the screen while they are transporting, transports them into the capsule on the roof. They regroup in the Communication Room and wonder why they were allowed to penetrate the capsule's defensive Time field. Trapped here, they explore, discovering a hole in the door where the handle should be, reduced to dust when touched by the Changeling earlier, but when Sapphire analyses the residue left on the floor by the door she finds only the primary states of brass and wood - they never achieved molecular structure, the door knob has never existed. In the living room they find the Changeling and Sapphire detects that it is human but has no knowledge, only basic needs - sleep, warmth, food and love - it is a baby in an adult's body. Sapphire and Steel are wary of getting too close but Silver assures them that it is nothing more than a clever piece of machinery. As he approaches it it touches him with its left hand and Silver disappears in a flash of bright light.

The voice from the hallway entity instructs the Changeling to touch Sapphire and Steel but it resists, crossing its wrists and running to the nursery.

Sapphire and Steel deduce that the Changeling is able to send things to the future by touching them with its right hand and to the past with its left. Steel instructs Sapphire to take Time back to before Silver disappeared and she tries, but while things do reappear briefly, including Silver, she is unable to operate in the room which is "alive with Time." Sensing where the Time source resides in the wall in the hallway Sapphire touches the spot and finds her hand smeared with animal blood. Noticing how the Changeling had crossed its hands to avoid touching them Steel tries to make it link its hands but the entity makes it resist. As Steel wrestles with the Changeling in the nursery Sapphire cuts her hand and presses it against the spot on the wall allowing Steel to link the Changeling's hands. Rothwyn, Eldred and Silver reappear and objects that had been reduced to their original state at the Changeling's touch reform while Steel now finds himself sitting in the cot holding the baby. Time is back to the present. Sapphire and Steel return the baby to its parents, then hear a noise in the living room.

It is Silver and Steel instructs him to open the entity's hiding place while he continues to question Rothwyn and Eldred. Silver uses Rothwyn's gold necklace to fashion a thin sheet of gold which he places over the spot on the wall, enabling him to see the circuits within. In the Communications Room Eldred shows Steel that the other groups aren't responding but his heightened sense of morality makes him reluctant to let Steel see in the bedrooms. Succumbing to Steel's pressure he relents and they see the bodies of the others, dead in their beds. Steel now has him play the other groups' logs and they learn that the Time source had tried to induce them to leave the capsule, endangering present day mankind and possibly Time itself, so they have taken their own lives to avoid this. Silver informs Sapphire that as well as circuitry he has also found advanced appliances associated with vivisection. Sapphire analyses the blood from the wall and finds it comes from every species of animal. Rothwyn and Eldred tell them how there are no animals in their future, only "pieces" kept in laboratories for use by scientists. It is one of these pieces that has been used to make the Time unit that brought them back to 1980 and now it is seeking revenge. The entity escapes from its lair and as they search for it Steel almost kills the baby when he hallucinates it as the entity. He then sees Sapphire as a blood-spattered doll and tries to strangle her. The unconscious Sapphire is still able to communicate telepathically with Steel and she tells him that he must lure the entity back to its lair and kill it before it breaks out of the capsule...

CAST

David McCallum (Steel); Joanna Lumley (Sapphire); Catherine Hall (Rothwyn); David Gant (Eldred); Russell Wootton (Changeling); David Collings (Silver).

Originally broadcast: 6/1/81, 8/1/81, 13/1/81, 15/1/81, 20/1/81, 22/1/81.

150 minutes approx. on video.

Another power that unfortunately is never properly exploited is her ability to change her appearance, Tardis-like, to fit her surroundings, but apart from a few quick changes to impress Rob in story one this power remains sadly neglected as, instead, her outfit for each story is a simple variation on her sapphire blue costume (and as she and Steel are clearly not of this Earth one wonders if more than just her clothes would have changed had their investigations taken them to other worlds...?). The one consolation, for male viewers anyway, is that her dresses (the less said about those shiny "pyjamas" in story three the better - which combined with the haircut she sports in that story brings her uncomfortably close to looking like one of those "silver-clad androids" Hammond was so keen to avoid!) became lower cut and shorter with each story so that the full-length dress and "slippers" of story

one have by story six been replaced with high-heels and a dress above the knee.

Steel's powers, like his clothes, are less showy (he wears a (different) suit in each story however inappropriate, most bizarrely in story two when he arrives at the dirty disused railway station in a dinner suit complete with bow tie) and apart from sharing Sapphire's telepathic abilities he also has immense strength (which still doesn't stop him being casually cast aside by one of the transient beings in story six) and in story one he displays an ability to lower his body temperature to near zero as he rescues Sapphire. Perhaps his greatest ability is the way he is able to deal rationally, and seemingly without emotion, with the strange situations they constantly find themselves confronting, doing what is necessary to bring the case to a satisfactory conclusion (although this usually just means containing the danger as

rarely can the outcome be considered a victory). So Steel, as his name suggests, is hard and unyielding, grudging in his dealings with (mere) humans who he sees it as his "duty" to protect and he is unable or unwilling to work with them (dismissing Tully as a "crank" only moments after they have met), preferring to take charge and issue orders (as Sapphire says to Rob in story one, her very first line in the series, "He's a shade too serious but you'll get used to him."). He is ultra pragmatic in his dealings with people, being quite prepared to use them if he feels the ends justify the means, so Helen is offered as bait in story one and Tully, much to Sapphire's horror, is sacrificed to the Darkness in story two, while in story three Steel favours setting explosives to destroy the tower block if they find they can't contain the danger even though it will, as Sapphire points out, lead to the deaths of 63 people and 15

animals (he dismisses her protests with a cold, "Human beings love a good sacrifice."). He isn't adverse to ordering Sapphire around either, nor in admonishing her if she is unable to carry out his orders. But he does prove to have a softer side, shown in story five when he gives Felix a diversionary task to take his mind off his impending demise and there's a poignant moment in story three when he and Sapphire realise they may have lost Silver forever (another emotion, jealousy, surfaces in his reaction to the easy rapport between Sapphire and Silver). At the same time he is also quite prepared to put himself in danger if necessary and the final irony is that it is this very sense of duty that leads to him insisting they take the woman with them at the end of story six, an act that leads to their downfall.

Just as their powers differ so do their characters and Sapphire is much more diplomatic than her partner, allying her charm with gentle persuasion to gain people's confidence. Although more emotional than Steel she is not without a hard side which surfaces at the end of story three when, appalled at what future man has done to animals, she insists that they send the entity that has been unleashed back with them to the future ("It's their problem. They caused it, let them solve it").

Like any good team their differences are complimentary, with the strengths of one compensating for the weaknesses of the other. They need one another (although Steel is clearly the leader) and each is prepared to put their very existence in jeopardy to protect the other, while in their dealings with people these "Tim detectives" use the hard and soft approach with Steel virtually bullying people into doing what he wants whereas Sapphire uses more insidious methods to achieve her ends.

With this in mind, they remain, Steel especially, a mysterious and slightly sinister duo so that when in story one Rob's father appears to him and tells him that Sapphire and Steel are the real enemies he (and the viewer) is inclined to believe him.

It seems the actors playing the parts were given as little information about their characters' origins as the rest of us, leaving Joanna Lumley to muse in a STARBURST interview (#28), "... I've worked out that we're ghosts. We died a long time ago, which is why we are able to disappear and flash in and out of walls (an annoyingly erratically used power - M. M.), and turn time backwards and forwards." As for them having human form, she said, "Oh, we must. It's essential we must. Or else I would have to be an appallingly barren, plastic person."

And so to the series. The aforementioned spoken introduction, which was always preceded by a brief prologue in the first episode of a story and a brief recap of the end of the previous episode on each subsequent one, is accompanied by a less than impressive title sequence which as STARBURST said at the time were some of the "shakiest opening titles seen on network TV in a long time."

Happily, Cyril Ornadel's title music more than compensates for this deficiency. Ornadel, who had supplied the music for several of Pete Walker's late

SEASON TWO: STORY FOUR (4 EPISODES) - SYNOPSIS

"As I was going up the stairs, I met a man who wasn't there. He wasn't there again today; I wish, I wish, he'd stay away"

Sapphire and Steel arrive at an old junk shop in 1980 where children in Victorian dress are seen at play. The shop, like the rooms above, is owned by a Mr Williamson but he is currently nowhere to be seen. Spotting one of the children watching them Sapphire and Steel try to catch her and in the process find themselves momentarily frozen into black and white photographic images. The girl gets away so Sapphire and Steel go to explore the rooms above the shop. In Williamson's room they find photographic printing equipment and various photographs including one from Victorian times that seems to have some of the children from it missing. Finding a tenant, Liz, in one of the rooms they question her about the landlord and she tells them that Williamson recently left and that there is now a new landlord, but when they ask her to describe him she is unable to remember what he looks like. On the stairs outside the room the Victorian children gather around a literally faceless man!

Back in Williamson's photographic room, Sapphire and Steel find more anachronistic prints and they also learn that Liz's flatmate, Ruth, disappeared at the same time as Williamson is supposed to have left. Liz now encounters the new landlord on the stairs and he is only too happy to show her his face. Sapphire and Steel start to learn more about the foe they face, how it broke through when the very first photograph was taken and has been present, unseen, in every one taken since. The Shape is also able to hide in any photograph, moving freely between them and in this way evade capture. Back in the junk shop Sapphire and Steel see the children again and once more Steel is frozen into a photographic image. The children turn on Sapphire.

Sapphire grabs the parasol held by one of the children and it crumples like the photographic paper it is. The paper children run off and Steel is freed, but he and Sapphire now come face to face

with The Shape itself, appearing as a different person to each of them. It taunts them and disappears into a photograph. Steel wants to destroy all the photos in the shop but accepts that it is a hopeless task when he realises they would need to destroy every picture ever taken. In her room Liz re-hangs a photograph that has fallen to the floor, failing to notice the presence of The Shape in the picture. Out on the stairs Sapphire and Steel show Liz an 87 year-old photograph with two modern faces peering out at them and explain that The Shape has trapped her trapped Ruth and Williamson within the picture. After Sapphire shows Liz what they are dealing with by encouraging her to try and grab one of the children which promptly crumbles in her arms, she joins them in the photo room as they try to make contact with Ruth. Working from an enlargement of the section of the photograph containing Ruth, Sapphire succeeds in making contact but The Shape spirits away the original print and causes it to burst into flames.

As the picture burns the image of Ruth fades and disappears from the enlargement. Sapphire desperately tries to take Time back to reverse the process but is unable to and instead finds herself frozen into a life-size black and white photographic image. Steel frees her and then demonstrates how Williamson had unleashed The Shape while performing photographic tricks for Ruth. They convince Liz that she must leave for her own safety but as she packs Sapphire and Steel are once more trapped in a photograph by The Shape. Unable to free themselves their only hope is if Sapphire can telepathically contact Liz and illicit her help, but The Shape is already on its way to destroy them while Liz is heading out the front door...

CAST

David McCallum (Steel); Joanna Lumley (Sapphire); Alyson Spiro (Liz); Philip Bird / Bob Hornery (The Shape); Natalie Hedges (Girl with Parasol); Shelagh Stephenson (Ruth).

Originally broadcast: 27/1/81, 29/1/81, 3/2/81, 5/2/81.

100 minutes approx. on video.

60's and early 70's films, also provides the equally impressive incidental music which is a key element in setting and maintaining the mood and atmosphere for each story, utilising a variety of styles and instruments to suit the different locations and time periods involved.

Story one - none of them have on screen titles, which might add to the series' air of mystery but is a pain for reference purposes and also lead to ITC unimaginatively calling them "Adventure One", "Adventure Two", etc. for video release - gets the series off to a solid start, introducing not only the title characters but also the way in which everyday objects (clocks/books/pictures) take on a more sinister air in the world of **SAPPHIRE AND STEEL** and are used by Time to gain entry into the present, so that reading from a book of children's nursery rhymes can conjure up strange images from the past with "Ring-A-Ring-O-Roses", which dates from the time of the Black Death, calling up the image of a plague victim and "Goosey, Goosey Gander" bringing forth "visual refractions" ("You probably call them 'ghosts'," Sapphire tells Rob) of Cromwellian soldiers - "There is a corridor," explains Sapphire, "and the corridor is Time. It surrounds all things and it passes through all things. You can't see it; only sometimes, then it's dangerous... You cannot enter into Time, but sometimes Time can try to enter into the present; break in, burst through and take things - take people. The corridor is very strong, it has to be, but sometimes, in some places, it becomes weakened, like fabric, worn fabric, and when there's pressure put upon the fabric Time reaches in and takes out what it wants..." There's also a hint at past operations and methods with Steel telling Rob how he had to sink the Marie Celeste and when Rob protests that the Marie Celeste didn't sink his enigmatic reply is, "Sank the real one." Story one also introduces us to one of

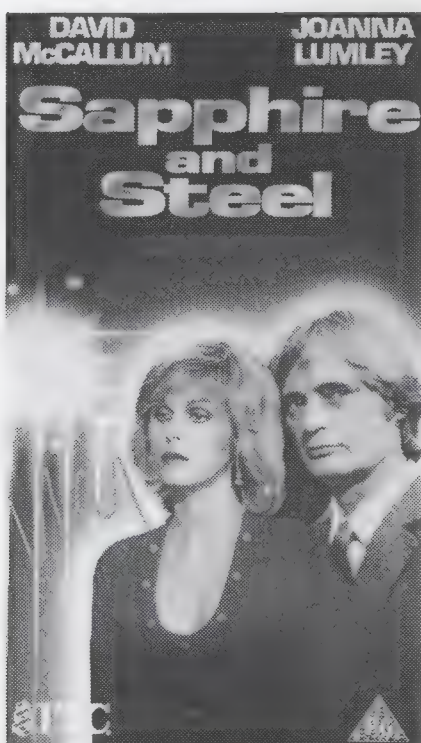
Sapphire and Steel's fellow elements, Lead, a jovial giant of a black man who seems to do little besides eat and laugh uproariously (though he does tell Steel that, "Jet sends her love," and that, "Copper's having problems with Silver."). We also learn that there are 127 elements that can be called upon, though Steel puts the number at 115 saying, "We must never rely on the transuranics... They're unstable."

As good as it is there are still weaknesses in this story, notably the rather pat happy ending (further evidence that it was originally intended for a younger audience?) and also the performance of Tamasin Bridge as Helen, or rather her delivery which is often garbled or unintelligible (it took several seconds of wondering who the hell "Trob" was before I realised the line "We've got to answer Trob" was in fact "We've got to answer it, Rob"!).

Story two (many people's favourite) dispenses with both happy endings and children in a downbeat tale of the aggrieved ghosts of dead servicemen gathering at a disused railway station (a neat metaphor for those on the last stage of their journey to eternity) where a dark force feeds on their resentment (something also seen in the reaction between Steel and the ghost-hunter Tully both of whom resent the others presence). In fact Tully is the only live human they encounter throughout the story and even he is destined to die, sacrificed to the Darkness, before the end. Heady stuff, especially after the softer, safer opening story, and although too long at 8 episodes - explained by the fact that Hammond originally submitted 13 scripts for 13 weekly episodes but when it was decided to make it a twice-weekly series an extra episode was needed so he extended the second story by one (in retrospect it would have been far better to have cut it by one) - it does still grip the viewer throughout and is a perfect example of



Joanna Lumley with David Cann in a scene from Story Two



The video sleeve for Story Four which strangely includes some stills from Story Six!

how the small budget, sparse sets and limited cast numbers are made to work in the show's favour, relying instead on strong performances and the creation of a suitably gloomy atmosphere for the proceedings. George Leuenberger's SPFX are also sparingly used and are all the more memorable for it, including the genuinely shocking sight of Sapphire with her eyes as two black orbs as she is infested by the Darkness (Joanna Lumley tells an alarming tale in her autobiography of how her eyes had to be anaesthetised, rendering her temporarily blind, so she could wear the required black contact lenses for this scene after which everyone else left for lunch forgetting she was sitting there alone and unsighted). The supporting players are also memorable with Gerald James quite superb as the doomed Tully and Tom Kelly suitably tragic as the soldier shot 11 minutes after the 1918 armistice.

Time had another part to play in this particular story as the ITV network was hit by a technical dispute soon after it started and as it developed into a full-blown strike all the ITV regions went off the air meaning only the first three parts were shown. Consequently, these three episodes were re-shown in late October and early November when the network came back on the air before continuing with the other five episodes originally scheduled for broadcast in August (and remain the only episodes ever repeated in the UK).

Season one was deemed enough of a success for ATV to go ahead and commission a second season, intended as the last, to be recorded in the Spring of 1980 and to consist of 3 stories in 16 episodes.

The first story of season two (shown, like the other season two story, in the 8:00 - 8:30pm time-slot whereas all the other seasons were shown at 7:00 - 7:30pm) is perhaps the weakest of the six (it's certainly the least satisfying) with a story concerning animal abuse, the morality of mankind and a Changeling with the power to send things backwards and forwards in Time. Despite many interesting and thought-provoking ideas (perhaps too many) the different elements of the story never really gel into a cohesive and comprehensible whole. It's a hotch-potch of ideas and images with stills from a slaughterhouse (strong meat for family viewing) shown side by side with floating cushions, an obviously fake swan, and a fur coat that slides along the floor of its own accord (all given life by an animal-based Time source seeking revenge). The SPFX department was clearly stretched beyond its means on this story, so while the swan's attack on Steel is quite convincing as it's done with sharp-angled

SEASON THREE: STORY FIVE (6 EPISODES) - SYNOPSIS

June 21st, 1980 and Lord Mullrine is throwing a party for his family, friends and colleagues to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the company he founded with his late partner, George McDee. No expense has been spared in recreating the correct 1930 atmosphere and leaving strict instructions with his secretary in the office just off the drawing room where the guests will gather that he is not to be disturbed under any circumstances he goes to welcome the first arrivals. Among those arriving are McDee's widow, Felicity, and his grandson, Howard, plus Sapphire and Steel who announce themselves as Miles and Virginia Cavendish. The guests are suitably impressed by Mullrine's efforts and the celebration begins. In the office, Mullrine's secretary gets an important call but when she tries to get out of the office to tell him she finds the door won't open.

With the party in full swing one of the guests offers a toast to the late George McDee but is interrupted by the arrival of McDee himself! The guests dismiss him as an impostor, hired as a tasteless joke by Mullrine, but Sapphire informs Steel that it is the real McDee, very much alive but due to die the next day, June 22nd, 1930. McDee leaves the party, going to his lab which is through the door that in 1980 leads to Mullrine's office. To lighten the mood a game of "sardines" is suggested and Sapphire and Steel take this opportunity to explore the house. However, their investigations are interrupted when one of the guests, Veronica Blamey, is found stabbed to death.

Steel assumes charge and when they find all possible ways in or out of the house barred they realise that the murderer must be one of them and suspicion falls on Veronica's boyfriend, Anthony Purnell, who has disappeared for the moment. Using the champagne glass Purnell had been drinking from Sapphire is able to use her powers to discover that Purnell has been having an affair with Mullrine's secretary and that he will die soon. Meanwhile the body of Veronica Blamey has disappeared leaving only the knife used to kill her. The guests gather in the drawing room and here Sapphire and Steel learn more about McDee and his work - that he was a genetic engineer working on breaking a genetic code that will allow him to manipulate a virus which will save thousands of lives. One more day and he would have succeeded, but he is also careless and had he succeeded an accident would have resulted in the extinction of life on earth. Greville the butler finds Purnell hiding in the dining room and insisting that he must speak to "Cavendish" immediately. But before Sapphire and Steel reach the room they hear a gunshot and arrive to find Purnell slumped over the table.

As Sapphire and Steel examine the room it suddenly ages fifty years, to 1980, but the gun is unaffected as it is from a different Time frame, and, Sapphire learns, it will be used again. Suspicion for the killing falls on Howard McDee who has been blackmailing Purnell. Meanwhile, Purnell's body too has disappeared. Back in their room Sapphire and Steel examine the knife and gun used in the murders and Sapphire discovers that they were used by "no living soul" and that neither weapon has killed anyone - Victoria Blamey and Anthony Purnell aren't really dead. Compelled by a strange force that possesses her Sapphire turns the knife on herself and makes to plunge it into her heart. Steel intervenes and snaps the blade of the knife but then finds himself staring down the barrel of the gun. He manages to break the hold over Sapphire and they now realise that the central intention of the force infesting the house is to take Time back to 1930, "killing off" the guests who weren't born then, starting with the youngest and working back, until Time takes a different course, keeping George

McDee alive so the catastrophic accident occurs. But they still don't know who in the house the force is using. Sapphire and Steel are called to dinner and as they leave the gun fades and disappears. During the meal Emma Mullrine, Lord Mullrine's spinster sister, slips away to visit her lover, George McDee, in his lab and once more beg him to leave his wife. George angrily storms out of the lab, causing the machines in the 1980 office to go haywire, and joins the others at dinner. Then, over dinner, Howard McDee is poisoned by the port.

The older guests gather in the drawing room leaving Sapphire and Steel with the only two guests left under 50, Annabelle Harborough and her husband Felix. Howard's body has now disappeared but as Sapphire and Steel try to explain what is happening Annabelle refuses to believe them and flounces out. She joins the others in the drawing room where she promptly dies by electrocution. Sapphire and Steel continue to explain to Felix that the murders haven't really happened, rather Time has been suspended, and to further convince him they call back Howard who assures him that it's true and that he is at a sort of half-way point. Appointing Felix "Agent Bronze" Sapphire and Steel send him to keep Mullrine occupied while they try and breach the Time barrier so they can enter Mullrine's office where they hope to find a record of the location and circumstances of McDee's death. With Sapphire's help Steel obtains the information he seeks. Discussing McDee's work with Felix, Mullrine offers to take him to see George at work in his lab, but McDee resents the intrusion and throws the culture he is working on at Felix. Felix staggers from the lab to Sapphire and Steel for help but, his face a mass of festering sores, collapses and dies. The clock strikes midnight.

Felix's body disappears and everything is now in place to replay the events of June 22nd, 1930 until Time takes a different course, but Sapphire and Steel must be sure they have the right moment before intervening. Again Emma visits George in his lab and again they argue so she storms out and goes to inform Felicity McDee of her affair with her husband. Devastated by this revelation Felicity takes the gun from a drawer in her dresser and goes to confront George. They argue and she pulls the gun on him but is unable to shoot. George makes to go to bed but on the way he argues with Mullrine and returns to the lab. Emma comes to him again and this time Felicity arrives to find them together. Felicity declares that she will never give George his freedom to be with Emma so Emma grabs the gun meaning to shoot her but George moves between them - this is the moment he should die but this time Emma succeeds in shooting Felicity, setting Time on its new course. Realising the force has been using Emma, promising her a second chance with George, Sapphire and Steel know they have to convince her of the terrible consequences of her actions if she doesn't go ahead and kill George. But she is unable to and their only hope is if they can convince George of what they say and he in his turn can persuade Emma to shoot him all over again...

CAST

David McCallum (Steel); Joanna Lumley (Sapphire); Patience Collier (Emma Mullrine); Davy Kaye (Lord Mullrine); Nan Munro (Felicity McDee); Jeffrey Wickham (Felix Harborough); Peter Laird (Greville); Stephen Macdonald (George McDee); Patricia Shakesby (Anne Shaw); Jeremy Child (Howard McDee); Jennie Stoller (Annabelle Harborough); Christopher Bramwell (Tony Purnell); Debbie Farrington (Veronica Blamey); Valentine Dyal (Radio Commentator).

Originally broadcast: 11/8/81, 12/8/81, 18/8/81, 19/8/81, 25/8/81, 26/8/81.

150 minutes approx. on video.

close-ups and quick cuts, when it is seen in the baby's cot it is all too obviously fake. The floating cushions are okay though the "living" fur coat just looks silly. The entity itself is also a disappointment, being little more than a grey blob that wobbles

across the floor. As for the objects reduced to their original state, it's a great idea and effectively done, but is it just me or does that former brown pvc settee look like a giant turd on the carpet?!

So the most notable aspects of this story are the



Sapphire gets wind of another Time irregularity

roof-top location filming (the only location filming in the whole series) and the introduction of the character Silver, described as a "technician" (unlike Sapphire and Steel who are "operators"). David Collings brings a puckish charm to the part and looks quite at ease with Silver's powers in manipulating metal, etc., which all serves to make Silver a very appealing and entertaining character. Other good support is provided by Catherine Hall as Rothwyn, Russell Wootton as the Changeling (cast for his facial similarity to his "mother" Catherine Hall who was nearly 10 years his junior!), while David Gant is suitably (and deliberately) weak and ineffectual as Eldrid. But overall this story leaves the viewer confused rather than intrigued and remains unfulfilling.

However, the series gets right back on form with the next story, a classic four-parter (and my personal favourite) about a force that broke through when the first photograph was taken and has now been let loose. Perfectly paced, the story starts with Sapphire and Steel arriving at "a cross between a second-hand bargain shop and a pawn-brokers", a place that disturbs Steel as he perceives it as "a roomful of triggers", and uses the highly original idea of having photographs, which after all are simply frozen moments of Time, as the medium that unleashes a foe who proves to be their most formidable yet. The many memorable scenes include the paper children released from an old photograph who appear to have a genuine sepia-like appearance, and when one is captured it simply crumbles to paper shards; the (presumably) Magritte-inspired faceless man (the Shape) who appears as a different person to both Sapphire and Steel (a clever touch as the enemy in most of the stories is seen to be two-faced, offering something to a person it is merely using for its own ends, and here it is literally two-faced); and

the death of Ruth, the woman trapped in a photograph by the Shape, done without blood or violence, her image simply fading from the photograph, along with her death screams, as the Shape burns the original, producing a truly eerie and affecting moment. There's splendid support from Alyson Spiro as Liz, the good time girl for whom times have gone bad, and if the ending seems a little too glib the pay-off comes when we learn that it is only a temporary solution which will need addressing again in 75 years time (something which Sapphire and Steel are in no position to do by the end of story six). The story

concludes with a chilling warning to Liz that she must destroy all the photographs of her in existence and never have another taken as long as she lives.

And that was it for season two as the next story, although filmed at the same time as the previous two, was held over until the Summer of 1981 and is the sole story in season three. This six-part story is also the only one not penned by Hammond, instead it was co-scripted by Don Houghton and Anthony Read who contributed three episodes each - Houghton's previous credits included two Jon Pertwee DR WHO stories, **THE PROFESSIONALS** and, like Hammond, **ACE OF WANDS** as well as writing for Hammer Films (including **THE SATANIC RITES OF DRACULA** - which featured Joanna Lumley of course - **DRACULA A.D. 1972** and **THE LEGEND OF THE 7 GOLDEN VAMPIRES**); while Read also worked on **THE PROFESSIONALS** and **DR WHO** (writing one story, co-writing another and acting as script editor for a couple of seasons during the Tom Baker era), having started writing for such series as **THE TROUBLESHOOTERS**, **THE LOTUS EATERS** and **SUTHERLAND'S LAW**. He also wrote two stories for and acted as script editor on the **HAMMER HOUSE OF HORROR TV** series (a role taken over by Houghton when it returned later as **THE HAMMER HOUSE OF MYSTERY AND SUSPENSE**).

Different in style to the Hammond stories, story five has a much more traditional storyline concerning a murder mystery at an old house, the twist being that it is Time that is "killing" the guests, youngest first, as it regresses 50 years to change the course of history - the story also involves ley lines and the summer solstice but this is never really built upon. The story keeps the suspense building well, making particularly good use of the cliffhanger device with episodes 2-5 ending with a murder and each time it is the chief

SEASON FOUR: STORY SIX (4 EPISODES) - SYNOPSIS

"Hours will become days and months, and years will become thousands of years, there is nothing but space."

In July 1981 Sapphire and Steel arrive at a petrol station, seemingly deserted except for the 1940's Rolls Royce on the forecourt. Here they meet Silver who has arrived in advance of them and he tells them of a man and a woman who are also there, in the station's cafeteria. Steel questions them and they insist they are a couple who were eloping in July 1948 when they suddenly found themselves at the 1981 petrol station. The trio discover that Time is stuck at 8:54 in this place, with the radio endlessly playing the same snippet of music and the speaking clock repeating the same Time over and over. Exploring the station, Steel sees the spectre of an old man. As the spectre fades the whole area starts to shake and Time jumps forward by 10 minutes.

As Silver and Steel question the man and Sapphire talks to the woman the couple seem to briefly become black silhouettes. The spectre of the old man reappears, clearer than before, and they are able to talk to him but he is unable to see them properly as he says he can only see things in his own time: 1925. He too becomes a silhouette before disappearing. Once more Time jumps forward, this time by 20 minutes. A storm breaks over the station and they hear the sound of approaching footsteps. Steel goes to investigate leaving Sapphire inside and despite the doors being locked she sees a series of muddy footprints come into the station and then the black silhouette of a man.

The silhouette becomes Johnny Jack, a travelling player in a troupe from, he says, 1957. Steel returns and the images of the old man, Johnny Jack and the eloping man all in business suits appear to Sapphire. Using his powers Silver is able to make an exact replica of Johnny Jack's tambourine allowing him to examine the original, concluding that it has never been played. To allow them to examine the couple's car Steel has Sapphire and Silver create an image of the car so that it will still appear to be on the forecourt. As Johnny Jack and the eloping man talk the woman tells Steel that she has something important to tell them. Reading her mind Sapphire is shocked to see her own and Steel's destruction and realises that they have been lured here to this Time trap with these "transient beings" who have been sent by a higher authority to kill them.

As Sapphire, Silver and Steel find evidence that the woman has been manipulated by the others to obey them the male transient beings find that the car is just an image and, assuming their true form, smash their way back into the station, desperate to find the car where they have hidden the Time box that enables them to travel in Time. They find the car but the box is missing and spotting it before they do Silver is able to make a replica for himself. As the old man materialises to join his fellow beings Time again jumps forward, this time by 40 minutes. Sapphire, Silver and Steel make to leave with the woman and when first the old man and then Johnny Jack tries to stop them they use Silver's replica Time box to banish them to the distant past. Armed with the Time box Silver and Steel search for the other man but before they can find him they receive a call for assistance from Sapphire at the edge of the Time trap. They arrive to find the man confronting Sapphire and the woman and as Steel fumbles to open their Time box the man opens his own...

CAST

David McCallum (Steel); Joanna Lumley (Sapphire); David Collings (Silver); Edward de Souza (Man); Johanna Kirby (Woman); James Boswell (Old Man); Chris Fairbank (Johnny Jack).

Originally broadcast: 19/8/82, 24/8/82, 26/8/82, 31/8/82.

100 minutes Approx.

SERIES CREDITS

Series Created by P.J. Hammond; **Writer** - P.J. Hammond (Stories 1/2/3/4/6), Don Houghton (Story 5 - Episodes 1,3,4), Anthony Read (Story 5 - Episodes 2,5,6); **Castling** - Maureen Riscoe; **Sound** - Len Penfold (Stories 1/5), Bob Woodhouse (Story 2 - Episode 1; Story 6), Henry Bird (Story 2 - Episodes 2,3,4,5,6; Story 3), Peter Wernham (Story 2 - Episodes 7,8; Story 4); **Cameras** - Mike Whitcutt (Stories 1/2/3/5; Story 4 - Episodes 1,2,3; Story 6 - Episodes 3,4), Gerry Elms (Story 4 - Episode 4; Story 6 - Episodes 1,2); **Vision Mixer** - Neil Guy (Story 1; Story 2 - Episodes 1,2,3,4,5,6), Mary Forrest (Story 2 - Episodes 7,8), Moyra Bird (Story 3), Yvonne Kelly (Stories 4/5/6); **Vision Control** - Jim Reeves (Stories 1/6; Story 5 - Episodes 5,6), John Crane (Story 2; Story 5 - Episodes 1,2,3,4), John Willment (Stories 3/4); **Videotape Editor** - John Hawkins (Stories 1/2/3/5/6), Al Pidgeon (Story 4); **Make-Up** - Mary Southgate (Stories 1/2/3/4), Anita Harris (Stories 5/6); **Wardrobe/Costumes** - Dawn Evans (Story 1), Mary Gibson (Stories 2/3/4/5/6); **Programme Administrator** - Ron Brown; **Floor Manager(s)** - Sean O'Farrell (Story 1; Story 2 - Episodes 1,2,3,4,5,6), Jeremy Van Bunnens (Story 2 - Episodes 7,8; Story 3; Story 5 - Episodes 1,2,3,4,5), Ron Blanchard (Story 4), Jeremy Van Bunnens & Martin Essex (Story 5 - Episode 6), Bill Goodall (Story 6 - Episodes 1,2), Ron Blanchard & Martin Essex (Story 6 - Episodes 3,4); **Stage Manager(s)** - Ann Murphy (Stories 1/2), Ann Murphy & Denise Shaw-Vance (Stories 3/4/5/6); **Production Assistant** - Joyce Lewsey (Story 1; Story 2 - Episodes 5,6,8), Sonia Hampson (Story 2 - Episodes 1,2; Story 3), Glenys Collins (Story 2 - Episodes 3,4,7; Story 6), Jan Woolsey (Story 4), Jean Stevenson (Story 5); **Special Effects** - George Leuenberger; **Title Sequence** - Ivor Weir; **Music** - Cyril Ornadel; **Lighting** - Jim Boyers; **Designer** - Stanley Mills (Stories 1/2/3/4/6), Su Chases (Story 5); **Executive Producer** - David Reid; **Producer** - Shaun O'Riordan; **Director(s)** - Shaun O'Riordan (Stories 1/3/5; Story 2 - Episode 8), Shaun O'Riordan & David Foster (Story 2 - Episodes 1,2,3,4,7), David Foster (Story 2 - Episodes 5,6; Stories 4/6). **Location Credits for Story 3: Film Cameraman** - Chic Anstiss (Episodes 1,2,3,5); **Film Editor** - Glen Cardno (Episodes 1,2,3,5). **Story 4 Photographic Research** - Margret Duerden; **Story 4 Photographic Acknowledgements** to: Birmingham Public Library, Cambridge County Record Office, Dorset County Library, Guildhall Library, The Gwynedd Archive Service, W.E.R. Hallgarth Collection - Grimsby, Hampshire County Museum, Kodak Museum, Norfolk County Library, Northumberland County Record Office, The Science Museum, Shropshire County Record Office, Victoria & Albert Museum, Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural History Society. An ATV Network Presentation (Story 6 Broadcast by Central TV). Distributed Worldwide by ITC.

suspect in the previous killing who is the next to die. This story also boasts a strong supporting cast (not to mention the largest) and especially good are Davy Kaye as Lord Mullrine, Patience Collier as Emma Mullrine and Jeremy Child as Howard McDee. Story five has been criticised for seemingly not adhering to the ground rules set earlier by Hammond but it all adds to the sense of intrigue and mystery and there are some interesting exchanges between Sapphire and Steel, including the following: Steel, "You know that Tony Parnell was in love with Anne Shaw, Mullrine's secretary?" Sapphire, "Not necessarily in love - he was using her." Steel, "There's a difference?" Sapphire, "On this planet, yes." Although story five was intended to be the last ATV decided that one more story was required to wrap things up and once more Hammond obliged with a typically strange and atmospheric 4-part tale which finally surfaced in the summer of 1982.

Anyone who thought this story would tie up all the loose ends and provide a tidy conclusion to the series was in for a disappointment as Hammond serves up a bizarre story of transient beings and time boxes which poses just as many questions as it answers. We do learn a bit more about Sapphire and Steel, how they were both approached, separately, by the "higher authority" that controls the transient beings to join them but they refused and now it has sent its minions to destroy them as it resents not just their achievements but also their independence (indeed, there's a feeling with all the stories, especially the Hammond ones, that the purpose all along was merely to destroy or trap Sapphire and Steel). Unlike story three the density of the plot adds to the power of the story and it requires (and repays) repeat viewings making it another contender for best story of the series, benefiting as it does from the return of Silver and the introduction of the transient beings, including a great character in Johnny Jack (with all his children on his back) memorably played by Chris Fairbank.

The final images of the final episode are like a surrealist painting with Sapphire and Steel trapped in the garage's cafe surrounded by infinite space. Silver's non appearance here suggests he was being held in reserve to affect a rescue at the start of the next series should the show ever be resurrected, but for now, and possibly forever, they remain trapped, ageless and timeless, in the restaurant at the end of the (ir) universe.

Such was the delay in getting this story to air that not only had ATV lost their franchise to Central in the interim (hence story six being presented as a Central production) but it also lead several newspapers to assume it was a repeat rather than a new story and list it as such.

There is also a minor change in the title voice-over on this story with "Lead" being replaced by "Mercury", though for no apparent reason as neither features in or is even mentioned during the course of the story (perhaps it was just to let us know that these agents aren't indestructible and if Lead can be removed so could Sapphire and Steel?).

The sparse legacy of the show in terms of merchandising spin-offs comprised one novelisation, written by Hammond and based on the first story, one annual (1981) and coverage in a couple of LOOK-IN annuals. There were cover features in both the TV TIMES and LOOK-IN magazine during the series' run with the latter also featuring a nicely drawn SAPPHIRE AND STEEL comic strip which ran for around two years. But what fans really wanted was a repeat showing and the advent of Channel 4 in November 1982 gave us hope that we might get our wish, but while they were more than happy to churn out endless re-runs of inferior American fantasy series which seemed to run for hundreds of episodes without half the ideas or originality shown by SAPPHIRE AND STEEL in its 34 episodes we are still waiting.

However, the start of 1992 did at last see a very welcome, and long overdue, video release for the first story in the series with the next three following over the course of the year and presumably the final two will follow in early '93. These are essential purchases for fans of the show but can ITC really justify issuing the first three "Adventures" as double tapes? The longest story, number two, might just warrant it at (approx.) 210 minutes, but stories one and three are only 6-part, (approx.) 150 minute stories (including all title sequences, story recaps and end credits) and there are plenty of films of two-and-a-half hours or more out as single cassette releases. I suppose we should be grateful that the 4-part story four was issued on a single tape, but the prohibitive price of double-tape packages probably means sales will be limited mainly to those who are already fans of the show when it really deserves the chance to find a new generation of fans and it seems a TV repeat is still the best chance it has of achieving this.

In the ten years since its demise SAPPHIRE AND STEEL's cult status has continued to grow, witnessed by the coverage it continues to receive in fantasy magazines, with favourable comparisons being drawn between it and the cult show THE PRISONER in the way that it challenged what could be achieved



David McCallum - still awaiting news of a SAPPHIRE & STEEL revival.

within the confines of a TV family entertainment show (has there ever been such a sombre show in such an early evening time-slot? - and just look at what fills the same time-slot nowadays!). Comparisons with THE PRISONER, a show which, incidentally, is currently enjoying its second outing on Channel 4, are not inappropriate, especially as THE PRISONER built its reputation on 17 50-minute (approx.) episodes while SAPPHIRE AND STEEL's is based on 34 25-minute (approx.) ones, but whereas the kitsch of THE PRISONER keeps it firmly rooted in the 60's SAPPHIRE AND STEEL (rightly) has a much more timeless feel about it and warrants an opportunity to find a new following among 1990's audiences.

Better than a re-run of course would be a new series and this certainly isn't beyond the realms of possibility as both Joanna Lumley and David McCallum have reminisced fondly about the series while in a recent interview P.J. Hammond expressed an interest in bringing it back even if it meant assigning two new elements if the original stars were unable or unwilling to return. Will it happen? Only Time will tell...

(N.B. - The information about when the various stories were made comes from the usually reliable TIME SCREEN, but a more recent article in DREAM WATCH BULLETIN suggests story three was recorded early in 1980 with the final three stories being recorded in one block later the same year - can anyone out there confirm which (if either) source is correct?)

• Thanks to B.P. Dunne and Robin Davies.

What the press said:

"One of the most unusual programmes to appear on television"
WHAT'S ON TV?

"Hugely popular... nail biting stuff"
LOOK-IN

"...wonderfully atmospheric"
TODAY

"...startling and original"
FANTASY EMPIRE

"Cyril Ornadel's low, brassy music enhances the dramatic effect, carefully accentuating the suspense and highlighting the claustrophobically eerie scenes"
STARBURST

"...A very good and exciting TV show"
FANTASY IMAGE

"...a somewhat unique blend of science-fiction and thriller"
TIME SCREEN

"...one of the greatest British telefantasy shows ever to have graced our screens"
DREAM WATCH BULLETIN

"...one of the few (shows) that really counts as a cult series... it produced some classic fantasy/horror moments"
TV ZONE

FAVOURITE

FANTASY
FILMS

OF...

Sam Sherman

Sam Sherman has long been associated with the world of fantasy cinema and has been connected in either a producing or directing capacity with such exploitation classics as: **BLOOD OF GHASTLY HORROR**, **BRAIN OF BLOOD**, **DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN**, **HORROR OF THE BLOOD MONSTERS**, **SATAN'S SADISTS**, **ANGELS - WILD WOMEN**, **THE NAUGHTY STEWARDESSES**, **GIRLS FOR RENT**, **BLAZING STEWARDESSES**, **CINDERELLA 2000** and **RAIDERS OF THE LIVING DEAD**.

He is the president of Independent International Films, used to edit Warren's **SCREEN THRILLS ILLUSTRATED** and, as you've guessed, is a big fan of fantasy movies.

In a recent issue of **SAMHAIN** (#36) Sam wrote an article about his five favourite movies - well, we've got double that as he has kindly furnished us with his Top Ten...

(It's interesting to note that in the **SAMHAIN** article he listed Karloff and Lugosi's **THE RAVEN**, which isn't included here!?)

1. **KING KONG** (1933) - Directed by Ernest B. Schoedsack.

"For sheer thrills this cannot be topped - all the best filmic elements are present in **KONG**. Animation, sets, script, good direction, sheer fantasy, great music score, good actors. Everything a film fan needs is here and the film has survived the test of time. Should be number one on anyone's list."

2. **THE BLACK CAT** (1934) - Directed by Edgar G. Ulmer.

"Karloff, Lugosi, Ulmer! Top people in a truly weird story in a bizarre setting. Well directed and unique. This film made a great impression on me as a teenager and I am still entertained by it. The film has its flaws but they are easy to overlook if one enjoys the film."

3. **DRACULA'S DAUGHTER** (1936) - Directed by Lambert Hillyer.

"A 'B' film with 'A' quality. I feel it improved on the original **DRACULA** as a production. The original film was a trailblazer but has dated badly. This film although lacking the magnetism of Lugosi, nonetheless has a superior performance by Gloria Holden (I think the weirdest in film history). She is aided by a fine cast including Otto Kruger and superior 'auteur' direction by Hillyer, who rarely came to this level in his other work."

4. **THE SIN OF NORA MORAN** (aka. **VOICE FROM THE GRAVE**) (1933) - Directed by Phil Goldstone.

"Zita Johann in a one woman show tour de force. A strange film directed by Phil Goldstone, a producer who was better known as a money lender in early Hollywood. The film uses flashbacks, flash forwards and dead people's perspective on living situations. The ending is really offbeat. An excellent independent film that is rarely seen."

5. **WHITE ZOMBIE** (1932) - Directed by Victor Halperin.

"Bela Lugosi was turned loose and this was the result. He had much to contribute to the content and making of this film. A very advanced film for its time. One of the first uses of zombies on the screen, has influenced all the other zombie films. Generally seen in poor print quality with poor sound which takes away from enjoying the film. Dated but still a trailblazing effort."

6. **THE MUMMY** (1932) - Directed by Karl Freund.

"Karloff, Zita Johann and ancient Egypt - what more can you want? An early effort that is still the best of all the **MUMMY** films. Eerie in mood and strange in subject and execution. Well produced throughout and definitely one of the all-time classics."

7. **THE RETURN OF CHANDU** (1934) - Directed by Ray Taylor.

"Bela Lugosi starred in this 12-chapter serial which was also issued as two feature versions, which contain most of the footage (without repeats) of the completed serial. Lugosi is the *hero*. His strange personality is on the side of good, and his dark, brooding persona is used against the darker forces of evil. Fun all the way. Well directed by Ray Taylor, with major feature quality production all the way. My first professional promotion was putting on a theatrical one night show of the two **CHANDU** features together - we packed the house. It still has personal meaning to me."

8. **THE LOST WORLD** (1925) - Directed by Harry O. Hoyt.

"This silent film is the grand-daddy of **KONG** and all similar films that have followed. The shame is that only the cut 5-reel version survives and not the complete 10-reel version. The dinosaur animation and special effects by Willis O'Brien are fantastic for 1925. No doubt this film had a great impact and influence on many film-makers and fans alike."

9. **SON OF FRANKENSTEIN** (1939) - Directed by Rowland V. Lee.

"For me this is the one and only **FRANKENSTEIN** film that really delivers. The 1931 production was the first of its kind and excellent in many ways, but like many films of the early sound era - it dates badly for today's tastes. **SON...** is modern in all of its aspects - great cast and great production quality."

10. **THE FLYING SERPENT** (1946) - Directed by Sam Newfield.

"This PRC quickie has a lot to talk about. Generally badly thought of, it is unique in its own way. It is the film that influenced the modern Q - as a fact I screened the original theatrical trailer for this film in the 50's in college when Larry Cohen was also a student at the same CCNY Film Institute. This has to be the first or one of the first 'Flying Monster' films. Consider how good the effects were coming from a small studio like PRC at the time. I don't believe that any other small '30's - '40's company ever made a horror feature like this (excluding the effects in Republic serials). Who did the effects for this? Bud Westmore? A superior production to the 1941 **DEVIL BAT** which is similar."



KING KONG - Sam's #1

Better the DEVIL You Know

Director/Writer,
**MICHAEL
ARMSTRONG,**
interviewed by
Paul J. Brown

I simply refused to start off this introduction with lines like 'Who is Michael Armstrong?' or 'Whatever happened to him?' because that's how articles in the past have commenced, and I believe that a majority of the FANTASYNOPSIS readership will be aware of him anyway!

Michael Armstrong was born in Bolton in 1944 and made his way to the world of films, after studying at RADA, through the theatre, with plays like 'The Rise And Fall Of Armageddon'. He had an early interest in horror and made a handful of home-movies while still at school. Then, after a few false starts, got his big break with a short entitled **THE IMAGE** (released with **SEX IN THE GRASS** in 1969) starring a young unknown, David Bowie! On the strength of that success he was then in at the deep end and directed his first feature film, **THE DARK** (aka **THE HAUNTED HOUSE OF HORROR/HORROR HOUSE**) (1969), an AIP/Tigon co-production.

It is, however, his next film that will be of interest to most horror fans, the notorious **MARK OF THE DEVIL** (1969), a landmark horror movie, and a film so strong that it remains banned in this country even today!!

After numerous behind the scenes problems on both of these features Armstrong decided to give directing a miss and turned to writing instead and several sex-comedies came (forgive the expression) next - **THE SEX THIEF** (1973), **ESKIMONELL** (aka **THE SEXY SAGA OF NAUGHTYNELL AND BIG DICK**) (1975), **IT COULD HAPPEN TO YOU** (aka **INTIMATE TEENAGE SECRETS**) (1976), **ADVENTURES OF A TAXI DRIVER** (1976), **ADVENTURES OF A PRIVATE EYE** (1977) and **ADVENTURES OF A PLUMBER'S MATE** (1978).

Then in 1977 he moved into, what could have been, very dodgy territory and scripted the re-enactment of the crimes of Donald Nielsen, **THE BLACK PANTHER**, directed by Ian Merick, but it turned out to be an interesting and thought-provoking docu-drama.

In 1981 he wrote a short called **DREAMHOUSE**

which went out as a support feature to **THE EXTERMINATOR**, this was then repackaged (and re-titled **SCREAM HOUSE**) and teamed up with two other shorts (**KILLER PUNCH** (aka. **THAT'S THE WAY TO DO IT**) and **GARDEN OF BLOOD** (aka. **VIRGIN MUTANT FAIRIES**)) which Medusa released on video as **SCREAMTIME** in 1983. It wasn't too long before he was back at the heart of the genre once again and teamed up with cult director Pete Walker to bring **HOUSE OF THE LONG SHADOWS** to the screen - although Armstrong's script was inventive and it had major genre stars, it was far too tame for an audience of 1983 to endure and failed to make the kind of returns Cannon were looking for.

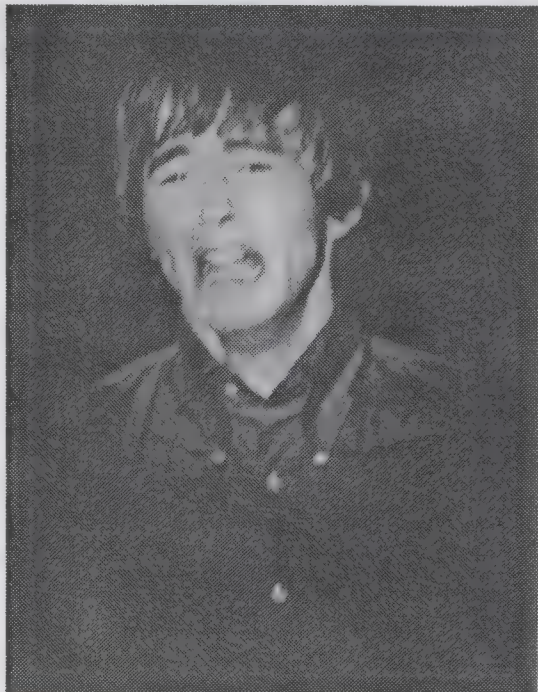
Since **SHADOWS**, Armstrong has been far from inactive and has written for television (**TRIANGLE**, **RETURN OF THE SAINT**, **THE PROFESSIONALS** and **SHOESTRING**) and after a spell in Hollywood has re-established his links with the British theatre. Depending on the success of his current projects, Armstrong has plans to get back to the cinema and direct in the horror genre once again. Let's keep our fingers crossed!

The following interview was conducted at Michael's home in March 1992...

Paul J. Brown: I gather that you made **NIGHTMARE**, a home-made horror film, when you were just twelve?

Michael Armstrong: **NIGHTMARE** was actually the third film I did. The first one was called **BLACK MAGIC**, a comedy about a schoolboy, played by myself, who finds a magic piece of paper with rune-writing on it, and he gets the power of life or death... so, every time he touches something inanimate it comes alive and every time he touches a human-being they drop dead, and that was basically the premise for it... it was a black comedy and the first thing I ever did. It was shot with an old Bell and Howell 624 camera on 8mm. Then I did **THE GAY GHOST**, would you believe, about a boy, me again, who got murdered for his inheritance and came back as a ghost to haunt

another boy to get even with him. Then came **NIGHTMARE**... by that time I had decided I was going to do a horror film... because I was still way under sixteen and wasn't allowed to go and see



Julian Barnes is very afraid of **THE DARK**

horror films, so it was how I imagined what horror films were like... it was a very surrealist sort of thing... it was about a boy, not me this time, who starts having these incredibly terrifying nightmares, running down corridors and all that sort of thing... and there's always a demonic figure, which we made up from some wire casing - it looked like a giant cockroach



Jill Haworth in **THE DARK**

with glaring eyes - and he keeps having these nightmares which get worse and worse, always ending with this demonic figure coming to do him in. All his friends think he's crazy and so on and the final nightmare is the worst, because he's terrified to go to sleep... and then the demonic figure comes at him with these huge glaring eyes... and the punchline,



Michael Armstrong at home with his favourite reading material



Mark Wynter's bloody demise in *THE DARK*

the twist to the end is that all the kids gather at school because he hasn't turned up and that he's been run over by a car... so you can see it was all deeply meaningful!

You were involved with a satanic project called *THE INITIATE*, did it ever get filmed?

No... I wrote *THE INITIATE* when I was eighteen and it was loosely based on a real-life case. I wanted to make a film that had that kind of 'it could happen to anybody' feeling and how people get dragged into this kind of thing... there were no supernatural elements in it, but there was an implication that it might be possible... there was a lot of circumstantial occurrences but mainly it concentrated on the idea of the sex orgy thing and so on. I started to do a lot of research on it and it was very weird because some very peculiar people started coming out of the woodwork. Looking back, at that time, it was a bit unnerving... I was given a lot of information which went into the movie... there was a doctor who was apparently supposed to do abortions and use the foetus' for sacrifice... this was many years ago and all that sort of stuff was in there. Anyway, I had no idea how to go about making movies at that point and I was going to shoot it at weekends. I phoned up all sorts of actors who after reading the script said, yes, they'd be prepared to do it for nothing... Sandor Eles, from Hammer's *THE EVIL OF FRANKENSTEIN*, was going to be in it, and Simon Dee and Ian Ogilvy... I found somebody who said they'd put up £50,000 to make it but I'd have to get the distribution. I found a company called Hemisphere, who I don't think exist anymore, who said they'd be interested but it would have to be



Robin Stewart gets friendly in *THE DARK* - he was never like this in *Bless This House*!



THE DARK

cleared for censorship purposes first. So, it went to the BBFC and we got a polite letter back saying that there was no way this film would ever be granted a certificate, so that killed it stone dead! I got very

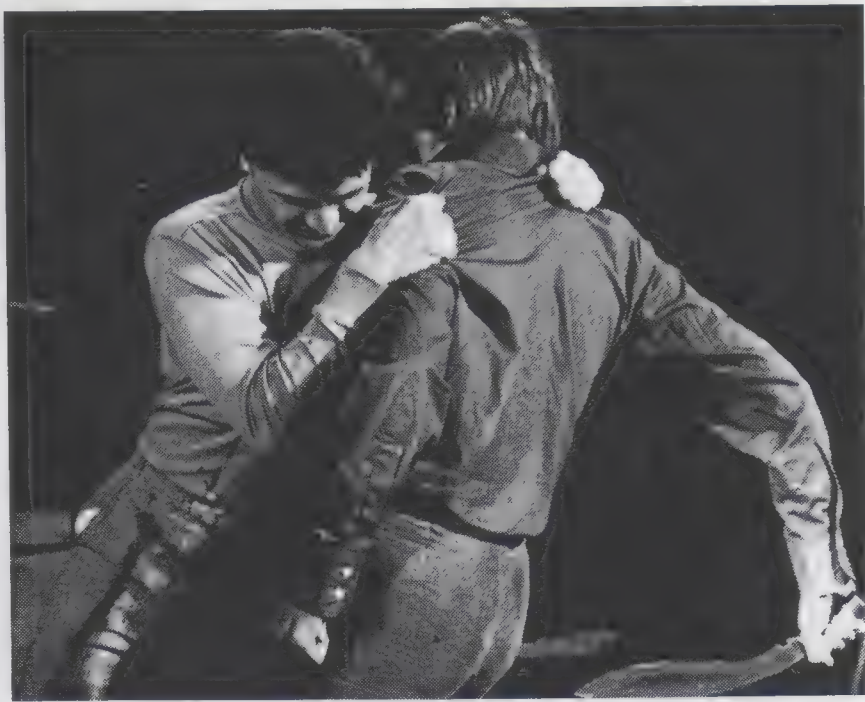
upset about that because it had been growing into quite a major thing... I'd then written a comedy thing called *A FLORAL TALE* and sent that in to the BBFC too, and they wouldn't even pass the credit titles!! I remember storming in there because I was convinced that John Trevelyan was personally out to stop my career. He asked me to sit down and tell him all about myself and we actually became great friends! He was a wonderful man... I owe him a lot actually... I used to go round there, smoke all his Benson & Hedges and drink his whiskey for hours on end and he'd tell me about all the bits he'd cut out from movies!

How did you get to direct David Bowie in *THE IMAGE*?

I was probably one of the only people who bought David's first album and I just loved it, I loved his humour and everything about it. So, I contacted David's manager and said that I would love him to star and do the music for *A FLORAL TALE*... the film never happened, but, inevitably, I became very friendly with David. His talent was so obvious and apart from his manager and myself, nobody seemed to want to know about him. So, when I got the opportunity to do *THE IMAGE*, my first thing was to put David in it.

Next came your big break, *THE DARK* (released as *THE HAUNTED HOUSE OF HORROR*), how did you get involved with that project?

After all my frustrations with the censor I dug up an old script I'd written when I was sixteen called *THE DARK* and I found a small commercials company who said they'd sort out the distribution if I could raise the finance... so, I went back to my original *INITIATE* investor who agreed to put up the money, but then the distributor went under leaving me wandering around wondering how to get distribution. I then went to John Trevelyan and told him about my situation and he said there was a company just starting up called Tigon. So, John phoned Tony Tenser and I went to see him on the following day. I went along and a few days later I was handed a contract and got paid £300. Little did I realise that the minimum was way above that! My backer then withdrew but Tony said he would collect the bill. Then there was about a six month gap, by which time I had spent the £300 and was virtually living on the streets, when I was suddenly called back and was



Don't play with knives in *THE DARK*



Frankie Avalon (r) listens to Julian Barnes (l) in *THE DARK*

I had a choice, not much of a choice actually, either Frankie Avalon or Fabian... they were under contract to AIP and they were trying to clear a backlog of dates.

Did you encounter any censor problems with that final graphic groin stabbing?

No... I think John (Trevelyan) let it go through... he was heading for retirement... the lovely thing about John was that he loathed the idea of censorship, if it had been entirely up to him he would have passed everything... so, he let it through, which was quite amazing for its day.

Were you happy with all the casting?

Most of the casting was nothing to do with me. I really wanted David Bowie for the Julian Barnes role... Dennis (Price) was the most ridiculous situation of all because, again, Deke Heyward suddenly came and said that Boris Karloff had got to be in it, and there was no part for him! The police didn't in fact feature in the film apart from one very brief scene. Deke tried to write in this sub-plot about Boris, who by that time was confined to wheelchair, and we were supposed to believe that Boris in a wheelchair was a red-herring suspect, wheeling around this old house with a kukri knife (laughs), which was utterly ridiculous. I refused to shoot this stuff and we did two versions, one for Deke

told that the film was going into co-production with AIP... and because it was in the contract that I was going to direct it they were stuck with me.

Did they want you out of the director's chair?

The person who did was Deke Heyward, who absolutely hated me. He'd done a whole pile of re-writes on it which were embarrassing and I went in and told him so. From that point on he did everything he could to screw the picture, but Tony stuck with it and was fine.

Was the London swinging-sixties scene part of your own background and the main reason for its setting?

In the original script the swinging-sixties thing was very small. The original intention was to send the whole thing up because it was really very empty. It was basically saying that these people had nothing better to do, although it seemed like a very gregarious situation, real relationships never manifested, hence the idea 'how well do you really know somebody?'

and so on, that was the thematic idea in it, which then took it into its stalk and slash theme. But, unfortunately, because of Deke Heyward there were terrible fights during the editing they went off and re-shot other material which I didn't have anything to do with... which is *ghastly* and ridiculous and that's when they tried to turn it into this swinging-sixties look!

After a slow start, the first on-screen killing was surprisingly bloody and violent, was the stabbing sequence mirrored from PSYCHO and did you edit that scene yourself?

Yes, it was edited by myself. I didn't really think of the shower sequence when doing that, I was thinking more of Eisenstein's Odessa Steps sequence... it really came from Eisenstein rather than from Hitchcock. That sequence had been written shot-for-shot when I was about sixteen... I'd written the script about a year before *PSYCHO* came out.

I have to ask this one, why Frankie Avalon?



THE DARK

Heyward and my version. Boris then became too ill and suddenly Dennis Price was pushed in, which made the thing even more ludicrous. Thank God, the wheelchair version got lost, at least it had him walking... but, it still left too much stuff in there that I never wanted. The film is a hybrid.

It's not until the film's final stages that the poignancy of your original THE DARK title becomes evident, who made that change and why?

It was changed at the last minute... the film had really been fucked around so much... nobody ever saw my complete cut, not one person! All the decisions to re-shoot and everything else came about from political reasons and had nothing to do with the picture. Arkoff and Nicholson (AIP chiefs) were very unaware of a lot of it. Now, I would have known how to deal with it, but at that time I was green and didn't know how to defend myself. Then Tony Tenser decided to play safe and give it a commercial title. I was editing *THE IMAGE* at the time in offices opposite Tigon and I remember looking out of the window and seeing the poster for *THE DARK* being removed and *THE HAUNTED HOUSE OF HORROR* one being put in (laughs). Tony loved titles... like *THE BLOOD BEAST TERROR* and all that sort of thing.

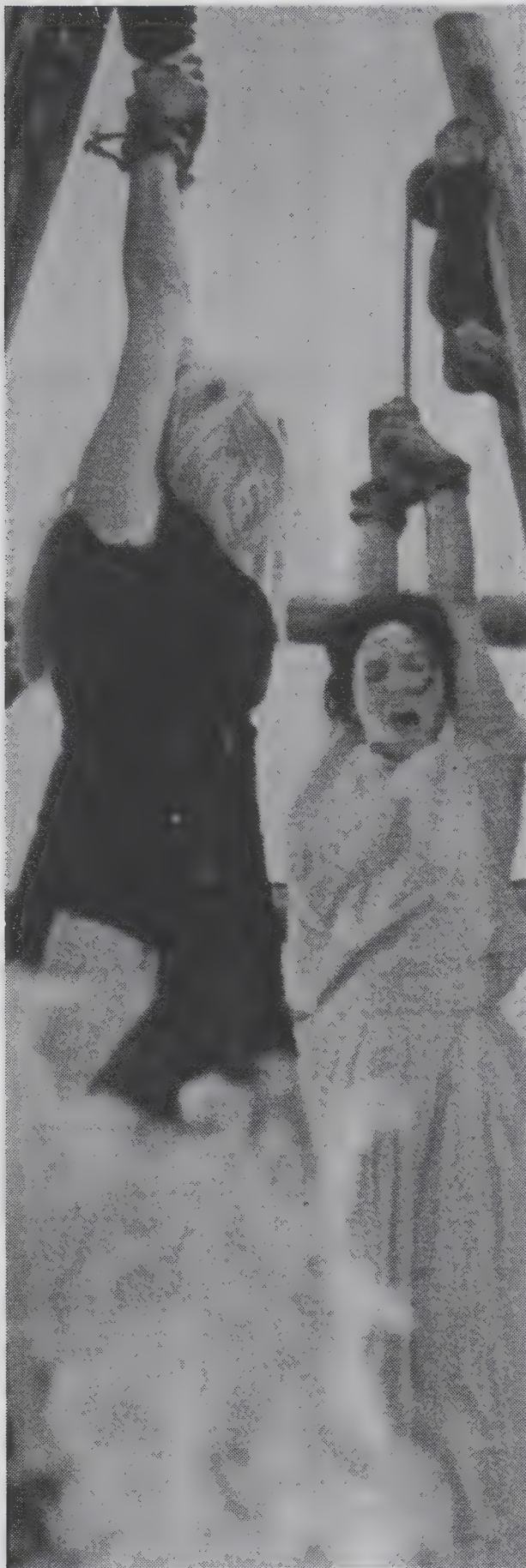
Was your own untampered film paced a lot better?

Oh yes... it was much sharper... it was saying something. A lot of the visually interesting things that I did all went completely! The opening of the film was a love scene, it was actually intercutting with the party... the credits were done over the party with a



Mark Wynter gets hacked up in the old *DARK* house

kind of slow-motion type of weird thing, with a love scene where you never saw the people. Each shot was just a gigantic close-up of parts of the body. The



Frying Tonight! - MARK OF THE DEVIL

opening shot was quite extraordinary, what you thought you saw was the desert night sky and a huge spider crawling over it, in fact it was Mark's (Wynter) back, against black, with a hand coming over. It was all like that, there was a tongue licking an ear lobe. It was the killer's mind and his imagining of what sex was like, which of course became clearer later... he was in fact a closet gay without realising it and there was a very strong sort of gay aspect within it... and all of that was taken out completely.

Can you give me your final views on the finished film?

I still find it very painful to watch... when I first saw it all put together I nearly died... the stupid sub-plot, it's badly shot and is so boring... it's dreadful, there's static and the colours are awful... it was just silly. I literally wept and I didn't want to know about the picture... the bits that are left of my cut are fine as a first go as it were. Even the ending was different, after the shots and the close-ups with the tiny cuts, etc., it then went to him walking in the town in a series of dissolves and he ends up in a doorway curled up like a little fetus, which was actually quite moving, but it wouldn't have made any sense with what's left because the characters became very trite and silly. I don't think any of this footage exists anymore.

I understand that before you became involved with MARK OF THE DEVIL it was a porno flick?

Yeah... what happened was Adrian Hoven, the producer, had written a script called 'The Witch-Hunt Of Dr. Dracula' which was a porno cross between WITCHFINDER GENERAL, DRACULA and THE MUMMY... an un-shootable film, I hasten to add! I was offered this and I refused to do it... at that time Hoven had written it and wanted to produce, direct and star in it. Gloria Films, who were coming up with the majority of the money, said "no way" and because THE DARK had done very good business in Germany they told him that he could have Michael Reeves or Michael Armstrong... but, Michael



Michael Maren in MARK OF THE DEVIL

Reeves, of course, was already dead by then. Anyway, I wrote it (as Sergio Cassner) and that was the start of my problems with Hoven. He still wanted to do his 'Dr. Dracula'... so, there was an awful lot of blood-letting off-screen as well as on!

Were you responsible for discovering Reggie Nalder?

No... I had really no influence on the casting. Udo Kier was the only one I had brought in. No, Reggie was already connected with it... the casting was virtually all done out there. Herbert Lom was already contracted, I knew about him but the others were sort of given to me.

Did the historical aspect of the witch-hunt thing genuinely interest you?

It was absolutely genuine... when I realised I was doing this I did a colossal amount of research on torture and everything that went on. It actually surprised me when I started reading about the damn things they got up to. Everything in there was documented and it was based upon real cases, even some of the victim's quotes are real. The Albino witch-hunter character was actually based on the real witch-hunter who had operated in the castle where we shot... the coach and a lot of the instruments were also real!

What was it like working with a predominantly German crew?

Bewildering, to be honest... I had a translator who



The US ad-mat for MARK OF THE DEVIL



MARK OF THE DEVIL's Reggie Nalder shows us why he never got invited onto TV's Come Dancing

was never there! We weren't shooting with live sound which was probably just as well because we had six languages operating on the picture. It was very difficult, we had Italian, French, German, English, Yugoslavian and a bit of Russian... somehow we managed to communicate, but it was very difficult.

How did Herbert Lom approach the role and what did he make of all the blood and gore?

He didn't worry about the blood and gore... the way he approached it was strangely where the theme got

a bit lost, because in the original script the character was a bigot, with no sense of humour... the witch-hunting started off as a series of guys who were using it as an excuse to screw women and earn some money, it was very anarchic. Then the church moved in because they suddenly realised that this could be very lucrative. They appointed their own official witch-hunters who went around and virtually wiped out the amateurs... and what I wanted to show was where Albino was doing it just for very obvious motives and then what happens when an institution takes over, particularly a religious institution, things get far worse. When you've got someone like that it's no holds barred... and it's only when he himself, by chance, commits murder that he starts to break up and goes completely loco... and Herbert played it as a humorous character, but in the original script there was an implication that he was, in a kind of way, homosexually in love with the Udo Kier character without consciously realising it and was

dependent in his own mind upon how he was looked up to... and once that psychological prop had gone that also helped his disintegration. Herbert turned it to impotency rather than this homosexual thing... he also added a humour within it, because he felt it was too straight-faced. So, with that, it sort of altered, to a certain degree, what would have been a much heavier film. He was the star of it and I was not in a position to be able to haggle with him... he was also far more experienced than I was and one is wise to listen to people who have been in the business longer in those circumstances. He was a delight to work with, a wonderful man and we got on very, very well. There were little things that he brought in which I think benefitted the picture, like a little speech between himself and Udo in which he wrote in this bit about being deaf in one ear and that someone bit him on the hand the other day... that sort of thing actually enhanced the film.

Let's have the full details on what your working relationship was like with Hoven?

As I said, there was more blood spilt off-screen... at the end of shooting I was standing there on set shouting "Fire me, you cunt, you bastard. Get me off the fucking picture!" (laughs)... that was our working relationship! Shooting would be held up for hours when we would scream at each other because he didn't want anything to do with my script... to the degree where he hadn't even had it printed up! My P.A. was sitting every night typing up the next day's scenes in various languages. He was still trying to do his 'Dr.

Dracula'. In the last few weeks it ended up where I went off and shot my stuff and he went off and shot himself, I wish he had done(!)... hence, that's why he's in it, he shot all his own stuff! He also had a set to with Herbert. They had known each other for a long time and it finished their friendship. I don't know what was said, but it was really disgraceful. Hoven would keep away when Herbert was on set, which worked very well, but as soon as Herbert's contract was up it got ridiculous and I wanted off the picture. The first time I saw the picture was when a print came over here. It's the cut I would have done but there are still a lot of areas that should not have been there, the editing is very jerky and my ending isn't there.

Was this the scene with ghosts in it?

Yes, after Udo has been killed and the girl's left crying over the body, the thing then went inside her mind and all of the graves opened and the torture victims rose out and tried to take the dead body back with them. She is left screaming "No, he's mine, he's mine, he's mine..." Hoven did the cut and obviously decided it didn't work or didn't understand it. It was never even in the German print.

The film's sheer relentlessness makes it quite uneasy viewing, was that your main objective?

Yes, absolutely... it just never stopped. Violence begets violence and these guys were just churning through them by the millions... it makes the Holocaust of the Second World War look amateur compared to what the witch-hunters had done!

Did any of the cast find the violence all too much and distasteful in any way?

No, not at all. We did have a female journalist in when we were shooting who had to leave the set! Nobody seemed in the slightest bit concerned... they all loved it... the more the better!

What actually happened when the film was submitted for certification?

Basically, it was just too violent, it was as simple as that. The more they tried to take the violence out the more nonsense the film became. There was so much violence in it, as you said, it was relentless, and if you start taking that out you end up with about a twenty minute movie... it just made nonsense of it, there was no way you could cut it, everything about it is violence, the story is violence.

What did John Trevelyan think of it?

He loved it, he thought it was great fun but he said there was no way he could let it through. In fact, he quoted it at great length in one of his books. It's quite a long paragraph listing all the things that happen. It built up a mythology, in a sense, that this was one film that was never ever going to be shown in



Adrian Hoven's sequel



MARK OF THE DEVIL



Working on the chain gang in **MARK OF THE DEVIL**

England. It was, and is even now, a very heavy film and that's after all that has gone on since.

*As **DEVIL** became banned, were you pleased and relieved when it eventually became available on Intervention video?*

Yes, I was actually... but that was even a very short lived thing (laughs). Yes, I obviously wanted the picture out and I was delighted and then, of course, it had to be withdrawn!

Did the film's notoriety play a key role in why you haven't directed a horror film for so long - did it make you an undesirable property?

No, not at all. The reason I didn't direct after that was because I'd just had my fill... it was all the fights on **THE DARK** and all the hell I'd gone through on **MARK OF THE DEVIL**... I was very young, I was only twenty-five when I did that. I was reeling from the emotional impact it had on me and I swore I would never direct a film again unless I had the creative control that I wanted. It had nothing to do with the film's notoriety... in fact, I was going to do a comedy film with Paramount called **THE KINKY DEATH WISH OF VERNON SLIM**. Udo Kier was going to be in it... but then the Hollywood slump occurred and that disappeared. Harry Allan Towers wanted me to do one called **FLESH AND BLOOD**, which was to be shot in Spain with Christopher Lee. He flew me out to Paris to talk about that, but I don't think he was able to raise money for it. There were one or two things like that... I wasn't particularly going out chasing anything, I was really recovering.

*Were you ever going to be involved with Hoven's sequel (**HEXEN/MARK OF THE DEVIL PART 2**)?*

No... it was mooted that I should do the sequel and

I said I would as long as Hoven had nothing to do with it?

Do you regret not capitalizing on your American success and directing films over there?

Yes, absolutely. I really should have gone over to America at that time, and I didn't. My whole career would have gone a very, very different way and I think I made a grave error by not doing that.

*You then did **THE SEX THIEF** and **ESKIMO NELL**, both scripted by yourself and both directed by Martin Campbell. You featured in the **THIEF** cast and even took the lead in **NELL** - as the latter's plot elements are so closely linked to your own cinematic experiences, does it mean more to you than anything else you've done?*

Yeah, absolutely... basically, I like the script and I can at least say that every moment in there is true and are quotes from real people (laughs). It's the accuracy that I like... I remember one reviewer describing it as a vendetta, it couldn't have been more perfect but it

wasn't really meant like that, it was just a complete sending up and drawing off all the absurdities of the characters I'd encountered in the film business and the idiotic things they come out with. It was great to lampoon it... and it holds up pretty well actually.

*After a V.D. film entitled **INTIMATE TEENAGE SECRETS** (aka. **IT COULD HAPPEN TO YOU**) you moved onto the **ADVENTURES OF...** trilogy (**...A TAXI DRIVER; ...A PRIVATE EYE; ...A PLUMBER'S MATE**), which seemed to be a cash-in on the successful **CONFESSIONS...** films - how did you attract a lot of stars like Judy Geeson, Jon Pertwee and Elaine Paige, etc., to them?*

Basically, by knowing them or sending them a script... it was quite economic for them to do because they'd come in and get their fee for two days shooting, in parts that they enjoyed doing... they were all fun little comedy roles. **NELL** helped a lot, of course, by having a hallmark of respectability about it.

*At what stage were you brought into **THE BLACK PANTHER** project?*

Very early on... Ian (Merrick) had approached Stanley (Long) to distribute the picture and Stanley was very nervous about the subject... and, basically, he brought me in to safeguard it, in a sense that he needed a decent script and that it wouldn't be exploitive in the way that it could have gone. Ian didn't want to do that anyway and he and I worked very well together. It was a grim project to work on actually.

Did you have any reservations about doing it?

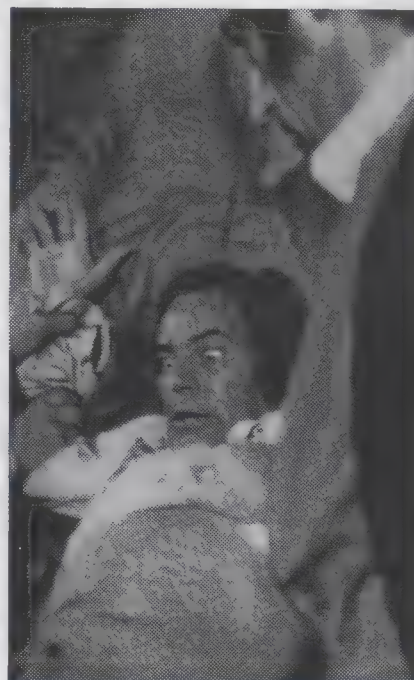
Yes... I actually laid down conditions and said that if it was a serious attempt to examine the case, then fine, but if there was any area leaning towards exploitation, then I didn't want to know. As it happened, that was the kind of film Ian and the distributors wanted anyway.

Were the locations, especially the underground chamber area, the real crime sites?

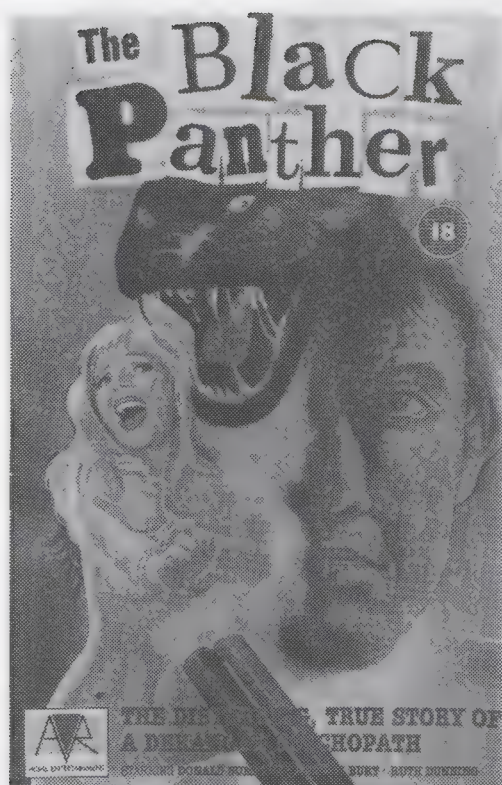
All the locations used were actual, other than the Post Offices, because we couldn't get permission... the interior of the chamber was obviously shot at Elstree, but everything else was all absolutely genuine.

Am I right in thinking that the film came under some very heavy criticism from the tabloid press and from the family of murdered Leslie Whittle?

From the family, no... the family, basically, just didn't want to know, it was as simple as that. Originally, Ian Holm was going to do the picture, but he said he wanted to speak to the Whittle family first. They didn't want to speak to him and he declined, but he loved the script... that's where Donald Sumpter came in. The tabloids, of course, had a field day. We tried to keep a low



MARK OF THE DEVIL



UK video sleeve for **THE BLACK PANTHER**. Note the ripped-off artwork from **HOUSE OF WHIPCORD**

profile while filming, but once the tabloids started whipping it all up then everybody else came charging in. It was condemned before it even opened at the cinemas. The picture is a very accurate examination of what went on. What I did was write off the transcripts of the trial... so, most of the film is based on what Nielsen said had happened, rather than on what anybody else had said... the only bits I did were add Leslie Whittle's lines, but it's all actually word for word as he claims he spoke... it was to that degree of accuracy.

Do you know if there was any form of reaction from Nielsen at all?

There was some form of reaction where I think he wanted to sue or something... funnily enough, had he realised that we had taken his own account he would probably be quite happy with it... because there was absolutely no attempt at judgementality within it. I just wanted to portray the events as closely as possible and let the actions and the man speak for themselves. In a sense, it's a very tragic story from his point of view... because he had this terrible socially deprived background which manifested itself into what happened and really begs a lot of questions about society and about the mentality that led him to do these things... the killing of Leslie Whittle is deliberately left open... because, personally, I tend to believe that he didn't actually murder her, I know it doesn't make any difference... but I tend to believe what he said actually happened and I think he probably did intend just to get away with the money then let them know where she was. I suspect that because he was just so open about everything else that he'd done and there was no particular reason for him to colour around that area. One got the impression that he just wanted to get the whole thing off his chest and he seemed far more concerned about the inaccuracy of things that were reported than what he'd actually done. I think **PANTHER** is a good film. I think it achieves what it sets out to do... which was difficult as it could've easily gone into the exploitation area. I think it works very well and Ian did a very good job

on it.

*The sleeve for the video re-release (on AVR) features cannibalised artwork from Pete Walker's **HOUSE OF WHIPCORD** poster, did you know about that?*

Oh God, no... I had no idea, no. I find that really rather distasteful... for **MARK OF THE DEVIL**, fine, but not for something like that because it's a real-life thing.

*Your next venture was **HOUSE OF THE LONG SHADOWS**, which marked the screen reunion of four horror legends, Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee, Vincent Price and John Carradine - how did the film come about?*

Pete Walker and I approached Menahem Golan to actually do another film which I'd written for Pete to direct... and Menahem's response was fine but he wanted us to come up with a film specifically for the 'four' first. So, Pete and I went away and we originally thought of doing a remake of **THE OLD DARK HOUSE** but we had problems over rights on that. Then he came up with 'The Seven Keys To Baldpate', so we got all the different versions out, and really, other than just the idea and one of the twists at the end, it was pretty unusable. So we took that as a starting point and decided to do a spoof homage to all that type of horror film that was made in those days... and that's why just about every cliché in the book is in there. I actually had a list of all the things we could think of

as clichés to make sure they were in. I wrote a twenty-page treatment, almost over night, which was whisked away to Hollywood. Pete met Vincent, John and Christopher out there and they agreed subject to seeing the script. I then got a phone call from L.A. from Pete saying "How soon can you have the script ready?", he'd told them it was almost finished, but I hadn't even started it! So, I wrote the script in two weeks, with the last batch of pages being delivered to Pete about two hours before his flight to L.A. was due!

The film was a complete change of pace and direction for Walker, was he happy with the end result?

I don't think so... I think we both tend to have slightly mixed feelings about it. I think he missed a lot of the campiness out which was very strong in the script...

I don't think he felt comfortable with it at certain points in the film. Certain parts worked wonderfully but in other areas the campiness and horror element didn't balance out. I'd actually intended the Desi Arnaz and Julie Peasgood characters to be a kind of young Fay Wray and Dick Powell and to be played at that sort of pace... and because of the casting he'd got I don't think he was able to do that... and again, the other two 'kids' that came into it, I intended them to be along the lines of Noel Coward and Gertie Lawrence... I think maybe Pete felt a bit nervous about going that far with it, and in retrospect I feel it should have gone that way. Maybe he feels the same, I don't know? Once he's in with the classic stuff and the old guys he's much more at home with it and that works very nicely.

Did you have to write a lot of changes to accommodate the 'four'?

No, not at all. It was written specifically for them. Right up front, Pete and I said that the only way we were going to get them to do it was if it was something they would have fun doing... and they *did* have a lot of fun doing it.

Did the Cannon chiefs tone Walker down at all?

They were never around... but I gather there were things cut out and changed which I don't think were his particular choice... but, I think Pete knows more about that than I do. There was one area where a lot of Vincent went, particularly in the piano playing scenes... I saw Pete's cut of that and it was very, very fine indeed. Who made those decisions and when, etc., I don't know... I think the post-production period had some sort of interference, which again, is probably why Pete's maybe not quite as pleased with it as he might have been. Cannon tried to sell it as a horror film which it was never intended to be, it was always meant to be a homage. The bits of footage that Pete showed me that he'd cut together were far superior to some of the end results.

*Can you fill me in on your un-filmed work, such as **THE ENCHANTED ORCHESTRA**, **ORPHANAGE**, **A STAR IS DEAD** and **THE CURSE OF TITTIKHAMON**, etc?*

ORPHANAGE has never been made, I still want to make it at one point through my own company somewhere in the next two or three years. It doesn't date... lots of people wanted to buy the script... it's definitely going to be controversial. **A STAR IS DEAD** was The Sex Pistols film, which Pete Walker asked me to come in on. We were going to go into production



(l to r) Desi Arnaz Jr., Julie Peasgood (before her days as a regular on Channel 4's *Brookside*) and Vincent Price in **HOUSE OF THE LONG SHADOWS**

and then they split up. **THE CURSE OF TITIKHAMON** was a huge spoof-comedy in the style of **AIRPLANE** and **THE NAKED GUN**, which, very sadly, fell through... it was a wonderful project. **THE ENCHANTED ORCHESTRA** was a mammoth, beautiful thing. It took two years out of my life and put me in colossal debt... I was just working for the love of it. There was a film I wrote which James Clavell was going to produce back-to-back with **TAI-PAN**. I was also going to do **DELIVER US FROM EVIL**, again for Pete Walker. It was an original script which I let him have a look at and he liked it very much... for some reason he couldn't get a deal on it in the States... he would have done a good job on it. I did some bits of work on **LIFEFORCE**... that was a weird film... I was brought in to script and work with the Special Effects section and to help with the storyboards.

From an article I read of yours in an old issue of 'Films & Filming' magazine, I know that you have strong feelings about screen violence and censorship in general - what are your views on today's butchering of films and the way in which the BBFC carries out this 'work'?

Exactly the same as they were then! I think it's ludicrous. I do agree with censorship on television but not in the cinema. I think to present violence nicely is not good, if you show it as the horror it is, then, yes. Violence on screen should be unpleasant because it *is* unpleasant... it is false thinking to have *nice* violence, that is dangerous. TV is in your home, it's for kids... it's not an involving situation... when you go to a cinema you have made a decision to see that picture, you are there and there is nothing to do except become absorbed in it, so you become involved... with TV it's a series of images that you are not emotionally connected to. I find TV very destructive to audiences because they become very lazy... they talk and make cups of tea... with TV you've got to keep hitting the audience to attract their attention... whereas in the cinema they're in there and you've got time to take them into the story and situations at a far deeper level.

Does it bother you that when your name appears in today's horror press it has the 'Whatever happened to...?' handle attached to it?

Not really... sometimes it's quite amusing. I went over to Avoriaz when **HOUSE OF THE LONG SHADOWS** was shown and I did an interview for French radio... it was very funny because they got me mixed up with Michael Reeves and they thought I was dead... it was the first posthumous interview I'd given!! No, I find it sort of amusing... it's all a part of the game really.

Is there any truth in the amusing story that said you were involved in some way with a phone-sex line in Los Angeles?



HOUSE OF THE LONG SHADOWS



The masters of gothic horror - Vincent Price, John Carradine, Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing - reunited for LONG SHADOWS

Oh, I won't say I was involved in it... what happened was to get a bit of cash someone introduced me to a woman who ran one of the many sex things and she wanted some scripts written. I did about a dozen, which were hilarious... she had a complete format and she took it *deadly* seriously... she would sit down and discuss these scripts in all seriousness... and she would say things like, "I don't think she would go 'ooh, aah, aah, umm, umm', I think it would be 'umm, umm, aah, aah, ooh, ooh'", and trying to keep a straight face doing that lot (laughs)... I kept some of them actually and some of the samples they showed me. They are *so* ludicrous. How anybody could get turned on by them, I just don't know. It was a great experience doing them, I must say.

So, what can we expect from you in the future?

I formed my own production company called Armstrong Arts and I started teaching drama. I actually created a new way of teaching acting, which I'm quite pleased with and it works rather well. The first group that I have been training are about to do their first show called 'The Illustrated Games People Play' which I'm directing. So, that's really occupying a lot of my time. I'm planning a commercial production for next year called 'The R And J Show', which is 'Romeo And Juliet' as a music-hall, which is quite outrageous. I'm talking about doing a film I wrote called **THE GHOUL FRIEND** in co-production with France... it's a black-comedy. There are various

theatre productions... and, of course, at some point I want to do **ORPHANAGE**... it's low-budget, about



Amaz and Cushing in LONG SHADOWS

a couple of million dollars... at the moment it is set in England and what I want to do at some point is to settle down and re-write it set in America, which gives it a much broader commercial appeal... it's very strong stuff, but not in the way you would expect, and it will have the same sort of controversy that **MARK OF THE DEVIL** had, I'm pretty sure.

I hope so! Thank you for your time.

Thank you for a very enjoyable interview.

*Thanks to David McGillivray and Bernard P. Dunne.

the Inquisition

Herbert Lom, Mark Of The Devil's Witch-Hunter, interviewed by Paul J. Brown

To coincide neatly with this issue's Michael Armstrong interview I was able to grab a few words with the star of **MARK OF THE DEVIL**, Herbert Lom, when he was in London's Forbidden Planet (back in March 1992) to promote a new book.

Although this veteran of the cinema has made numerous appearances in the genre I did not have enough time to delve deeper into his career and decided to concentrate on his role as the Witch-Hunter in **MARK OF THE DEVIL**...

Paul J. Brown: What attracted you to the part of the Witch-Hunter in **MARK OF THE DEVIL**?

Herbert Lom: It was interestingly written and I knew the producer, Adrian Hoven, very well... he is a very good actor too.

The film was first written by Adrian Hoven under the title 'The Witch-Hunt of Dr. Dracula' - were you involved with the project at this stage?

No, I never knew about that title.

Had you seen Vincent Price in **WITCHFINDER GENERAL** before making the film?

No.

Did you get on well with director Michael Armstrong and were you happy with his direction?

Yes, yes... but he left halfway through, but don't ask me why because I don't know.

Did you make any significant changes to his script?

That I don't remember.

I have heard about the bad feeling on set between

Armstrong and Hoven - did this prove much of a problem for the cast?

Yes, it did, because he had to leave! I don't recall any arguments on the set though.

I was told that there was some form of argument between Hoven and yourself, is this true and if so what was it about?

That could be true, but I don't remember it.

In spite of the grim goings-on in front of the camera, did you have a lot of fun whilst filming it?

Yes, it was a lovely part of the world... the Austrian Alps are beautiful.

How did you react when you heard that the film had been banned (and still is) in Britain?

I never knew it was banned, that's the first I have heard of it? Why is it banned?

At the time it was deemed too violent and strong.

Oh, they didn't like the scenes of torture then?

That's right.

I think that they should try releasing it again... I think that it would go through nowadays.

I don't think so somehow, not in the current climate of things... it did get a release here in the early eighties on video, but was quickly withdrawn again!

It's sad... what title was it given then?

MARK OF THE DEVIL.

I never, ever saw the finished film... It was on show in Germany, but I missed it! The producer died shortly after... and one thing and another I never saw the finished film.

Hoven actually made a sequel though didn't he?

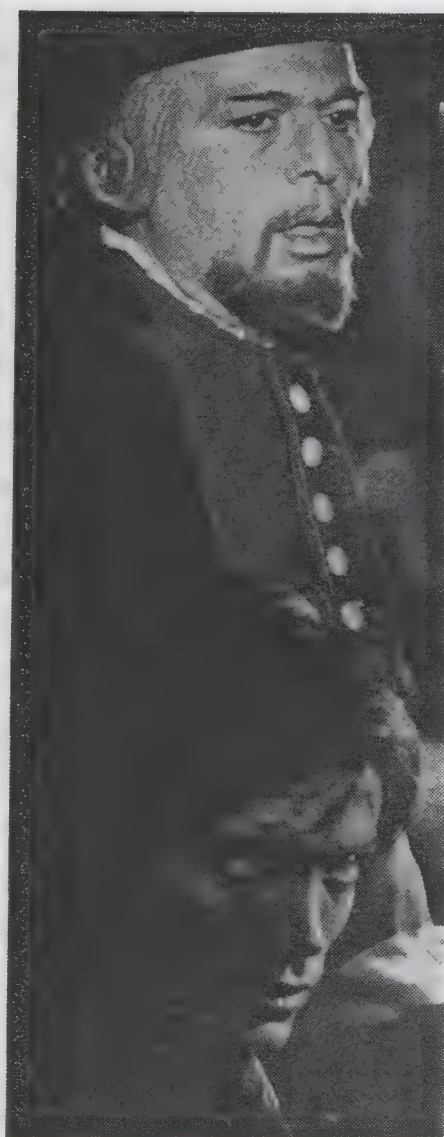
Did he?

Yes, it was called **HEXEN**.

The one I did was released in Germany as **HEXEN**.

Really... Even by today's standards it is still a very intense and violent film - were you aware whilst making it that it was going to be a very heavy experience for audiences?

No, I wasn't aware of it... you never know how a film will turn out and what they will do to it, etc.



Herbert Lom with Udo Kier in MARK OF THE DEVIL

Just to round up this brief chat about the film, how would you best describe MARK OF THE DEVIL?

I would describe it as a 'C' picture!! We were making it under the most awful goddam conditions... with it being a foreign film I was very anxious to speak up properly. I arrived on set and asked for the soundman and the microphone and they said there isn't one! I think that best sums it up and I'm not prepared to go any further than that (laughing).

(laughing) That's fair enough.

Why are you interested in this film anyway?

Because it's so rare... I have interviewed Michael Armstrong about it too.

Really? Tell me, what is Michael Armstrong doing nowadays?

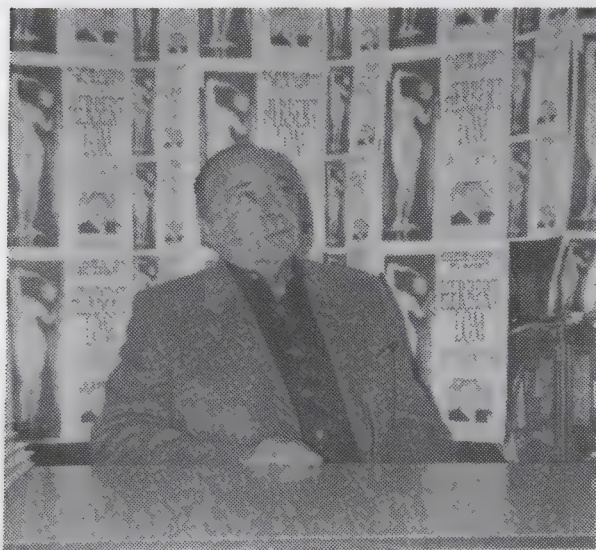
He is involved with a lot of things but concentrating mainly on theatre and teaching drama... he has told me about his desire to make more films though. When was the last time you saw him?

When I did this film!

Herbert Lom, thank you for your time and good luck with the book.

Thank you.

* Thanks to Forbidden Planet.



Herbert Lom at London's Forbidden Planet



THE JOHN LANDIS MODERN CLASSIC IS GIVEN THE FULL FANTASY SYNOPSIS TREATMENT BY MARK MURTON

SYNOPSIS

On a three month European hiking holiday, American students David Kessler and Jack Goodman find themselves in Northern England. Cold and hungry, and with night closing in, they decide to seek food and shelter at the village pub in the hamlet of East Proctor - the invitingly named 'The Slaughtered Lamb'. They receive a cold reception and the strained atmosphere quickly degenerates into open hostility when they start asking questions about a pentagram symbol on the wall. So, despite the cold and dark, they decide to move on and with the locals' warning to "Stay on the road; keep clear of the moors" and "Beware the moon" ringing in their ears they set off. They try to keep up their spirits with jovial banter but these spirits are soon dampened again as it starts to rain, then they realise they have inadvertently strayed from the road onto the open moor... Their attempts to apportion blame are interrupted by an awful

howling echoing across the moor. They decide to head back to 'The Slaughtered Lamb' but the howling comes again, closer than before. Terrified, they start to run, hurrying blindly on, but suddenly it is upon them, knocking Jack to the ground and ripping his flesh apart. At first David carries on, but unable to desert his friend he doubles back only to find that he is too late, the creature has finished with Jack and now turns on him... Shots ring out and the beast is felled by the guns of the villagers who have followed the boys. David drifts into unconsciousness. Awakening in a London hospital, David is told that he has been unconscious for three weeks. He is also informed of Jack's demise and that, despite his protestations that their attacker was a wild animal, an escaped lunatic was responsible. With care and encouragement from a beautiful young nurse, Alex Price, David starts to recover physically though his fitful sleep is still punctuated by vivid and violent dreams which cause him to fear for his sanity. This seems to be confirmed when he receives a visit

from his dead friend Jack who cheerily informs him that he has now joined the ranks of the undead while David is destined to become a werewolf at the next full moon.

Despite his mental turmoil David is thought to have recovered sufficiently to be discharged from hospital and having nowhere else to go he accepts Alex's offer to continue his convalescence at her flat.

Arriving at the flat they share a shower and make love, but later, as Alex sleeps, David receives another visit from the rapidly decaying, though still convivial, cadaver of his recently deceased friend who once more insists that he will become a werewolf at the next full moon - due the next day.

With Alex at work, David spends the next day alone in the flat trying to entertain himself with books, TV and food, anything to keep his mind from Jack's portentous prediction, but he is unable to concentrate on anything and finds that he isn't even hungry. Eventually, as evening falls, he becomes aware of a growing physical discomfort which soon turns to agonising pain as his body metamorphosises into that of a wolf.

With the transformation complete the lycanthropic David stalks the London streets and in a night of carnage dispatches a couple on their way to a dinner party, a trio of tramps, and a man on the London Underground.

Next morning David awakes in the wolf cage at London Zoo, naked and human again but unable to remember how he got there, and he has to employ some ingenuity to get back to the flat without being arrested. Reunited with Alex, David has no knowledge of the events of the previous night, all he knows is that he is ravenous - for Alex!

Meanwhile, Dr Hirsch, the doctor who has been treating David, pays a visit of his own to East Proctor and despite receiving a welcome similar to that afforded the boys he starts to piece things together. Back in London, David and Alex are travelling in a cab with a loquacious cabbie who insists on discussing the deaths of the previous night and as the awful truth dawns on David his euphoria evaporates and he leaps from the cab determined to get himself arrested and under lock and key before that night's full moon. Unable to get the police to take him seriously David decides on a more drastic course of action, but before attempting his intended suicide he phones home to tell his family he loves them.

Finding suicide harder than he imagined, David despairingly wonders what to do next; then, as evening approaches, he sees Jack beckoning to him from the entrance of a sleazy Piccadilly porn cinema. Venturing inside, David finds himself face to face not only with (what's left of) Jack but also the victims of his previous night's activities, all of whom implore him to take his own life so that they might rest in peace, even offering advice on the best method. But it is too late, the moon is up again and once more the transformation begins...

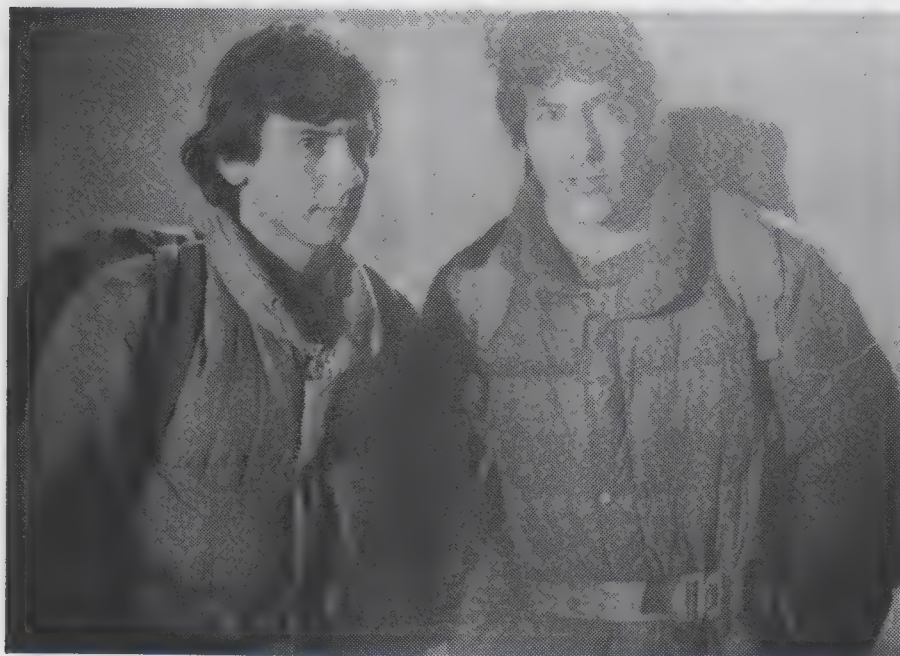
Outside the cinema the police are gathering and Alex and Dr Hirsch also arrive on the scene. Bursting out of the cinema, the lupine David causes panic and chaos resulting in a multiple pile-up until he is eventually trapped in an alley. A distraught Alex ventures towards him as the police marksmen gather behind her and take aim...

REVIEW

"Remember The Alamo"

Films, like the moon, go in cycles and in 1981 it was the turn of the werewolf with three high-profile lycanthropic tales on release - **THE HOWLING**, **WOLFEN** and **AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON** (plus Larry Cohen's less high-profile **FULL MOON HIGH**) - the most successful of which, artistically, financially and critically, was John Landis's **AMERICAN WEREWOLF**.

However, the subsequent success of the film masks the difficulty Landis had in getting the project off the ground, something he'd been trying to do since coming up with the story while working as a flunkey ("now they're called production



Griffin Dunne and David Naughton unwisely step onto the moors

assistants") on the film **KELLY'S HEROES** in Yugoslavia in 1969. Driving to the set one morning, Landis and his companion happened upon a gypsy funeral where the body of a rapist was being buried at a crossroads in the belief that this would ensure he couldn't rise up and do it again. Intrigued, the 18-year-old Landis, who already had a number of unfilmed screenplays to his name and was then formulating ideas for one with a supernatural theme, abandoned his idea for a vampire tale in favour of a werewolf one because, as he wrote in **FILMS ILLUSTRATED** in August 1981, "The werewolf is the only international beast... every culture in every age in every country in the world has some sort of man-into-animal myth", and being a teenage American in Europe so his heroes became young Americans in Europe.

The original setting, however, was not to have been London but Paris, that was until the man Landis had befriended on **KELLY'S HEROES**, Jim O'Rourke - Clint Eastwood's stand-in on the film and later producer of Landis's first film **SCHLOCK** (he subsequently died and **AMERICAN WEREWOLF** is dedicated to his memory) - told him, not quite accurately as it turned out, that by making the film in Britain he'd qualify for money from the British government (this was the Eady plan whereby by filming in Britain and employing the requisite number of British labour the makers qualified for a percentage of the UK box-office take plus various tax rebates). This sounded like free money to Landis and so the setting switched to England with mainly British characters and **AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON** was born. With the location now settled, Landis was able to finish his script and give or take a few dialogue and minor detail changes this was essentially the film he shot some twelve years later. Selling the script proved far more difficult than he could possibly have imagined, constantly being met with the same rebuff, "It's too frightening to be funny", but when he'd explain that it wasn't meant to be a comedy the familiar response was "But it's very funny". Consequently, the film was optioned no less than seven times but still no nearer being made and with Landis's self imposed deadline - "I knew I had to make this film before I was thirty or I never would" - drawing ever closer.

Meanwhile, though, Landis's directing career had really taken off, first with the money-spinning **KENTUCKY FRIED MOVIE** and then the mega-hit **NATIONAL LAMPOON'S ANIMAL HOUSE** plus **THE BLUES BROTHERS** (which, depending on your source (ie whether the author of the piece liked Landis), was either an expensive flop or a sizable hit despite the high cost), marking him out as one of the most talented and bankable young directors in America - none of which helped secure the desired financial backing for **AMERICAN WEREWOLF**, perhaps because these were all comedies which can only have served to further confuse potential backers as to what he wanted to achieve with his werewolf script.

And so, disillusioned with the studio way of making films, Landis and his partner George Folsey set up their own production company, Lycanthrope Films Ltd., to produce the film themselves, allocating themselves a budget of \$10m and borrowing from banks on the strength of a film negative pick-up deal with Polygram.

With the project finally given the green light Landis contacted his old friend and **SCHLOCK** collaborator Rick Baker (who had designed and created the gorilla suit worn by Landis in that award-winning film)



A Nazi demon from David's darkest dreams



David's transformation begins - David Naughton sporting some truly excellent Rick Baker make-up

to inform him that the film involving a werewolf transformation they had first discussed back in 1971 was now on. This put Baker in an awkward position as he had already agreed to work on the make-up effects for Joe Dante's werewolf film **THE HOWLING**, but feeling his allegiance lay with Landis he left the **HOWLING** transformation in the more than capable hands of his then assistant Rob Bottin and went to work with Landis.

With the fix such a costly part of the film (both in terms of time and money) Baker insisted on a year's pre-production to get everything ready for shooting, meaning Landis would have to cast his two male leads well in advance of filming to allow Baker time to make body casts, etc. for the complex fx scenes. So, still without a distribution deal and funding Baker out of his own pocket, Landis chose a pre-production start date of February 2nd 1980 and set about finding his male leads while Baker and his crew (soon nicknamed "The Wolf-Pack") went to work on the demons of David's dreams. (As it turned out,

Baker still couldn't work with the actors for a further 3 months due to an actor's strike and so he used the time to iron out the technical difficulties of the transformation.)

Casting sessions took place in New York and Los Angeles and after seeing close to a hundred people at the New York sessions Landis found his "Jack" in the form of Griffin Dunne (which, as Dunne told **FANGORIA** (issue 29), came as something of a surprise as he didn't even have to read for the part, he just met with Landis and they talked and swapped jokes and a short time later Landis phoned to tell him he had the part). But finding a "David" to fit his exacting criteria ("The character is naked a lot of the movie, so he had to have a good body... I wanted someone who was handsome and charming... (and) someone who could undergo incredibly uncomfortable make-up", he told Jim Steranko in **PREVUE** issue 46) proved more difficult and after seeing hundreds of hopefuls he still hadn't found anyone suitable. Then Landis's wife, costume



David (Naughton) begins his amusing journey back to the flat

designer Deborah Nadoolman, suggested he see "that Dr Pepper kid" and so David Naughton, known throughout the USA as a singing and dancing pepper in a Dr Pepper TV commercial, was seen and cast (again without a formal audition) - this despite Polygram pushing for "stars" in the lead roles. Landis did oblige with a star for the female lead, genre favourite Jenny Agutter who had been introduced to Landis while he was shooting **KENTUCKY FRIED MOVIE** in 1977 and he told her then that he was planning a werewolf film that he wanted her to be in although she didn't actually accept the part until being sent a script in November 1980.

AMERICAN WEREWOLF's 9-week shooting schedule began on February 3rd 1981 in the Welsh village of Crickadarn (doubling for Yorkshire), a tiny hamlet of only six cottages, one farm and two churches - but no pub, so art director Les Dille (an Oscar winner for his work on **STAR WARS**) and his crew converted one of the cottages into one (and they did such a convincing job that several thirsty tourists tried to quench their thirst there). Landis's insistence that they film there in February and March to ensure authentic weather conditions was rewarded when they experienced snow, sleet, rain and bursts of bright sunshine - all in one day!

Filming then moved on to the disused wards of an empty London maternity hospital for a further two weeks shooting. From there it was in to the grounds of Windsor Castle (a film-making first) and underground to Tottenham Court Road tube station. After that filming moved to Piccadilly Circus for the film's climax - a night shoot that promised

plenty of problems and which nearly didn't happen at all, but Landis's persistence paid off and he eventually gained permission to film there early one Monday morning between 2am and 4am. Actual shooting

took five hours but was still accomplished with only minimum interruption to the flow of regular traffic. Two more familiar London landmarks followed in Trafalgar Square (with another first when they were allowed to lay a dolly track across the square - and even get the shot in one take thanks to the heavy rain that had kept crowds to a minimum) and Tower Bridge, and then it was back to the studio for the completion of filming.

Despite the unprecedented cooperation received when filming in Piccadilly Circus it still wasn't possible to shoot everything on location and in the end about 25% of the scene was filmed on sets at Weybridge which included an exact replica of a section of Shaftesbury Avenue leading off from Piccadilly Circus. In general it was the insert shots that were filmed here, such as the wolf biting through the police inspector's neck, then when it bounces on the street it's Piccadilly Circus again - causing consternation to the occupants of the first car allowed through after completion of the shot as a policeman had to hold up the traffic while a colleague went to retrieve the severed head from their path!

The reason the scene is set in Piccadilly Circus at all was due to Landis's desire to use the Eros cinema as the setting for David's final encounter with Jack, and in 1969 the Eros had been showing cartoons so Landis was to have intercut the "real" violence of the scene with the cartoon violence showing on the screen but when he returned to England in 1975 to work on the Bond film **THE SPY WHO LOVED ME** he read that Piccadilly Circus and therefore the Eros was about to be pulled down and so he switched the action to a porno cinema in Leicester Square; then, when he arrived to shoot the actual film he found both Piccadilly Circus and the Eros still standing but now itself showing porno films and so he married together his original choice of location with the porno cinema idea (while the contrasting of real and cartoon violence is still retained, in a fashion, in one of David's dreams where his family sit watching **THE MUPPETS** on TV as gun-toting Nazi monsters burst in). Once completed, the finished film received several test screenings as a result of which Landis made minor cuts to three of the more graphic scenes of violence (one being - noticeably - the attack on the tramps).

With the final cut now settled the film was released in August 1981 (and appropriately enough it was distributed in the USA by Universal who had brought us the Lon Chaney werewolf classic **THE WOLF MAN** forty years earlier).

The fears of those reluctant to back the project that



The zombieified Jack (Griffin Dunne)

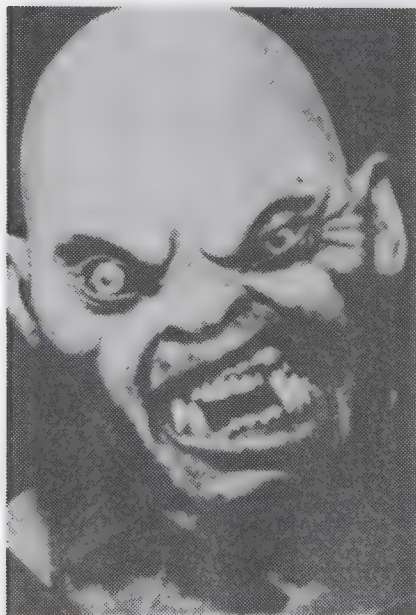
this unusual blend of horror and humour wouldn't find an audience proved completely unfounded with the film finding favour with (most) critics and audiences alike and it soon became the biggest hit of 1981's pack of werewolf movies; and come March 29th, 1982 Oscar got in on the act too when Rick Baker proudly stepped forward to receive his Academy Award for his work on the film in the new regular category of Best Make-up.

How Landis managed to successfully combine two such seemingly disparate film styles - where so many others, before and since, failed - is explained by his insistence that **AMERICAN WEREWOLF** is first and foremost a horror film, one that just happens to be extremely funny. So there's no cop-out on the intensity of the horror, when a scene is meant to be horrific it is, with no inappropriate attempts at humour to compromise the effect (such as that stiffling claustrophobic attack on the man on the Underground - made all the more horrific by the use of such a recognisable modern setting), while at the same time other scenes skilfully use humour to temper the more graphic visuals (the first and best example being Jack's general demeanour when he returns to inform David of the fate that awaits him), and still leaving room for straightforward comic situations (such as the naked David's return from the zoo to the flat).

In this Landis the director is well served by Landis the writer, with a script that shows a great affection for and understanding of the genre so that he knows just how far to go in a familiar, almost clichéd, scene such as the one where the boys intrude on the members of the small tight-knit community in their village pub (and we've all been in that pub!) without it ever descending into spoof, while at the same time not being so reverential that when David innocently inquires of those urging him to take his own life "But don't I need a silver bullet or something?" he can't be swiftly dismissed with a "Oh, get serious would you" from Jack (silver bullets being an invention of the Universal script-writers of the 1940's).

Described by Landis in **FILMS ILLUSTRATED** as being "like Greek tragedy" with the two leads "marked for death right from the moment the movie starts" - hence we first meet David and Jack as they travel in the back of a truck among some sheep (lambs to the slaughter) and this is underlined by the name of the pub where they seek (but fail to find) refuge - and from here Landis deftly remains true to the spirit of the legend while also introducing some inspired new additions of his own as he takes this fantastical supernatural theme and sets it in a completely realistic contemporary setting with his intelligent, sophisticated modern lead forced to react to the absurd situation he finds himself in (naturally he assumes he's losing his mind).

With these boundaries now set we quickly see how



Yet another bizarre dream-demon



Griffin Dunne as the "walking meatloaf"

this blending of the two styles will work with the boys exchanging funny lines as they trudge across the moor after leaving The Slaughtered Lamb without sacrificing any of the terror and tension of the scene as the banter falls away when they come to realise that something out there in the dark is stalking them; indeed, Landis cranks up the tension to such a pitch that it's almost a relief when the actual attack comes! Then the straightforward horror of David's early nightmares is followed by his first post-mortem visit from Jack, played completely straight with only his good-natured dialogue to serve as a welcome distraction from his truly foul appearance - of course the very idea of such an occurrence is ludicrous and our initial reaction is to laugh, but it's a nervous, uncomfortable laughter and (for this viewer anyway) it becomes less funny, more uneasy, with each of Jack's subsequent (further decayed) appearances. Humour has always been a safety valve in dealing with unexpected shocks and Landis exploits this expertly, a prime example being the reaction to

David's dream-within-a-dream (a device that really shouldn't work as well as it does but thanks to Landis's adept direction it does anyway) which makes everyone jump whether watching in a packed cinema or a small group, and is quickly followed by an outburst of laughter. This dream-within-a-dream, leaving us unsure as to what's real and what isn't, also neatly sets us up for Jack's first appearance at David's bedside.

Never a comedy and never meant to be there's still room for outright comic scenes too, such as the aforementioned one where David tries to get from the zoo to the flat and cover his nudity along the way ("Mummy, a naked American man stole my balloons") and of course that naff porno film, **SEE YOU NEXT WEDNESDAY** (the legend Landis works into all of his films - and spot the poster advertising it on the Underground wall (when you might also spot a clock reading 13:01 when the scene is meant to be taking place at night)), showing at the Eros cinema at the film's climax and made especially for the film by



"I told you not to come in while I was changing!"

Landis; "It was fun, but there's nothing erotic about it", he told *PREVUE*, a description that applies equally well to *SEE YOU NEXT WEDNESDAY* itself and unlike the highly erotic shared shower between David and Alex earlier in the film. *SEE YOU NEXT WEDNESDAY* also ties in neatly, albeit in a very lighthearted way, with another of the themes explored by Landis, "The sexual metaphor also interests me", he told *PREVUE*, "With a metamorphosis you're basically talking about an erection, a part of your body that transforms", and so, in the hospital after the attack, David becomes sexually attractive to both of the nurses, one will later bed him while the other admits to having peeked at him under the bedclothes while he was asleep; and after his night on the town as a wolf David is clearly turned on by the killing spree (his first decent meal since the attack on the moors) and he begs Alex for a "quickie".

The cinema scene also includes the sublimely silly moment when a police constable making his way up the aisle is framed, complete with unfortunately shaped helmet, against the raunchy action on the cinema screen, while another comic highlight, one that needed no outside input, is with the use of clips David watches on television while alone in Alex's flat, and so he finds himself watching the test card on BBC2, darts on BBC1 and an advert for the News of the World featuring "Naughty Nina" on ITV (Landis had intended to use an advert for The Sun but when he showed it to people in America they simply refused to believe it was genuine so he settled for the greater verisimilitude of the News of the World one instead!).

The one comic scene that doesn't work (for me at least) is the encounter in his office between Dr Hirsch and the two police officers investigating the attack on the boys, a tired run through of a familiar routine with the clumsy, over-eager cop irritating his superior with his behaviour, it wasn't original even in 1969 and just doesn't work. Other comic situations arise naturally from the story - unlike *THE HOWLING* which relies on esoteric in-jokes for much of its

humour - but this scene serves no real purpose and just acts as a distraction, slowing down the action. But this is a very minor complaint and doesn't alter the fact that Landis has forged what was then, and remains now, the finest werewolf film to date; though as he was quick to point out in the *PREVUE* interview: "I didn't. A lot of us did. Rick Baker did."

It's certainly true that Rick Baker's contribution to the success of the film can't be overstated, not just for his much lauded transformation effects but also for his work on the attack on Jack on the moors and his subsequent, ever decaying, appearances to David, plus the demons of David's dreams, the wolf-David's attacks and the Jack puppet used in the cinema scene (though Griffin Dunne did still have a hand in Jack's performance here as he was one of the 6 operators of the puppet, and they also first filmed Dunne acting out the scene and then tried to manipulate the puppet to match his movements). Interestingly, Baker confided to *FANGORIA* (issue 14) that the copious amounts of blood on display weren't his idea but rather Landis's, "John's responsible for the blood, I didn't put any blood on anybody; John insisted on doing that himself!" As mentioned earlier, Baker nearly didn't work on the film at all and even after he had left *THE HOWLING* Landis still had to accept that Rob Bottin had been able to take several of Baker's ideas and techniques with him (as well as continuing to seek advice which Baker generously provided) to a rival film that would be out prior to his own, something which, as he told *PREVUE*, "I'm going to hold over Rick's head for the rest of his life." - Ironically, Landis himself was also to have been involved in *THE HOWLING*, in a small acting role, until the schedule changed and he couldn't do it; while Baker also worked, uncredited, on William Hurt's ape-man make-up for *ALTERED STATES* when the work load threatened to overwhelm Dick Smith, another film with a scene in common with *AMERICAN WEREWOLF* with the hero waking up in a zoo the morning after his transformation.

With or without the blood it's impossible to imagine *AMERICAN WEREWOLF* without Rick Baker's ground-breaking contribution, the full story of which is told in *CINEFEX* issue 16 (April 1984), a Rick Baker special covering his career up to the making of *GREYSTOKE: THE LEGEND OF TARZAN, LORD OF THE APES*.

But as Landis says, *AMERICAN WEREWOLF* is far more than just a one or even two man show and the whole cast deserve full credit for playing it at just the right level to stop proceedings from degenerating into parody. The time and trouble taken in finding a suitable actor to fill the role of David certainly pays off with David Naughton allying his natural charm to a strong performance that makes David an attractive, likable character so that we share in his horror and distress at what is happening to him, while Naughton also deserves credit not only for enduring the rigours of marathon make-up sessions (something he wasn't entirely unfamiliar with as he also had a bit part as a chimpanzee in the *PLANET OF THE APES* TV series which starred his elder brother, James, as Burke, one of the two stranded astronauts) for the transformation but also for his performance during this scene which really brings home the terrible physical pain David is undergoing as his body shifts and changes, and together with the make-up effects combines to make it wholly convincing - and how many of us would have agreed to venture naked into a cage of wolves for not one but six takes of David clambering out of the cage?

Griffin Dunne also spent his fair share of time in the make-up chair as he was transformed into the undead Jack, an experience that affected him deeply for, as he told *FANGORIA*, "(when) I realised what I was gonna look like through this picture... I sort of went into a coma, into a state of deep depression... It wasn't so much vanity, it was really a sense of it being... wrong, in a way, being that realistically dead. At the time it really bothered me. I thought I would bring it on myself or something." Happily he survived, in the long term to help bring us the brilliant



The shooting party home in for the kill

AFTER HOURS in 1984 and in the short term to create a wonderful rapport with David Naughton that convinces us they really are old friends and to provide a performance that makes the undead Jack far more than just a "walking meatloaf".

The rapport he established with Naughton was fairly instant, despite the fact that they had never previously met, so that Landis even retained some of their rehearsal improvisations for the actual takes (mainly in the opening scenes on the moor).

In the role of Alex Price, the female lead and primary British character, beautiful Jenny Agutter graces the fantasy genre once again and shows just what she is capable of when given a properly drawn, three-dimensional character to work with (who mentioned **LOGAN'S RUN**?!); it's just a pity that there aren't more scenes exploring and developing her relationship with David - as for how a nurse could afford such an expensive-looking flat, this is something she did address herself to, deciding that Alex had rich parents who supported their daughter in her chosen profession.

Another character who deserved more screen time is Dr Hirsch, as portrayed by velvet-voiced John Woodvine, especially his visit to East Proctor where his investigations into the attack on David demand further development (perhaps more scenes were scripted and even filmed but dropped from the final version?).

And even the smallest supporting role seems to have been cast with care and consideration - a fact that many critics felt obliged to draw attention to - chief among these being Brian Glover, here faring far better than in the recent **ALIEN 3**, as the nominal spokesman for the villagers of East Proctor who tells the joke about the Alamo, expertly working his audience to illicit the exaggerated laughter that further isolates the boys (expertly working the film's audience too it seems as Landis admitted in **PREVIEW** that he was surprised to find viewers genuinely amused by the joke, which wasn't really the intention). The pub scene also features an early appearance by Rik Mayall (as "2nd Chess Player" - still, it's better than Jeff Goldblum's "Freak!" credit on **DEATH WISH**) and this remains the best film he's appeared in to date (right, kids?).

Other star cameos include Kermit the Frog and Miss Piggy appearing as themselves (among several other amusing credits) while also getting in on the act as Landis himself as the man who crashes through a plate-glass window during the Piccadilly pile-up (drawing on experience he gained when he

and Jim O'Rourke went to Italy after **KELLY'S HEROES** to work as stunt-men on a series of Spaghetti Westerns, continuing to do stunts on sundry European films before returning to the States) plus David Naughton's wife who also appears as a bystander in this final scene; and even the cast of **SEE YOU NEXT WEDNESDAY** give and bare their all for the film.

Credit too to Malcolm Campbell's editing, Les Dille's art direction of course and Bob Paynter's cinematography, with the location shooting helping to realise Landis's desire to make London one of the stars of the film, but not, for once, with a romanticised tourist's-eye view of the city, but rather the view of someone who knows the place well; so Piccadilly Circus is grimy and uninviting and a cliché shot of Tower Bridge here serves as the backdrop to the squalor and deprivation suffered by the tramps, making London an alien setting to add to David's sense of isolation. (Landis also takes time out to have a few digs at the British weather, tabloid press and TV and the insular nature of village pubs among other things.)

Also noteworthy is the use of music in the film, as much as for where it isn't used as for where it is, as none of the actual fright scenes are underscored in the traditional way but just left with the natural sounds of the scene and consequently Elmer Bernstein's score only totals about 11 minutes; although Landis does of course utilise several "Moon" songs, strategically placed throughout the film, with three versions of "Blue Moon", Van Morrison's "Moondance" to accompany the shower scene and Creedence Clearwater Revival's "Bad Moon Rising" serving as a precursor to David's transformation - two songs not heard on the soundtrack are Bob Dylan's version of "Blue Moon" and Cat Stevens' "Moon Shadow" as, according to Michael Weldon's **PSYCHOTRONIC ENCYCLOPEDIA OF FILM**, neither would grant permission for their work to be used in

such an irreverent film! Despite all of this, however, **AMERICAN WEREWOLF** still isn't a totally satisfying viewing experience. The problems arise in the last reel, first with that multiple pile-up and then the killing of the wolf-David. The pile-up (apparently inspired by a true incident where a stray dog ran onto a motorway causing a major accident) sits uneasily with the rest of the film, too OTT to be horrific, yet too savage in detail to be funny, it serves no particular purpose (except to continue Landis's penchant for trashing cars) and it's then too big an adjustment to come down from this for the intimate, poignant scene of Alex's last encounter with David. Despite sterling work from



*What's big, hairy and very dangerous?
A werewolf with a sub-machine gun!*

Agutter (her best scene in one of her best performances) it still lacks the emotional punch it should have at this key moment (another reason for including more scenes of the blossoming romance between Alex and David?).

The horror and comedy elements might work but perhaps it was stretching things too far to hope it would work as a love story too?

Also, David deserves a better fate than just being gunned down in a grubby back alley, earlier in the film he tells Alex "I think a werewolf can only be killed by someone who loves him", so couldn't this romantic notion have been played out for him with Alex doing the deed (with or without silver bullet) or at least let David go out in a blaze of glory, dying in a hail of bullets as he rounds on and attacks the police marksmen? Either way, the ending we are presented

What the press said:

"Landis has achieved a fine blend of horror and humour... you're in for a treat"
PHOTOPLAY

"A stylish and witty and ultimately spine-chilling story. Excellent (lead) performances, with splendid backing from a strong supporting cast... make it something rather special."
FILM REVIEW

"A jokey horror film that's even funnier than it thinks it is. It's a howl."
David Quinlan - FILMS ILLUSTRATED

"Thanks to Rick Baker, AMERICAN WEREWOLF is often splendidly macabre to contemplate... But (these scenes) are like fragments from some other film, perhaps the production that Landis will make when, one day, he has worked out how they fit together."
Philip Strick - FILMS & FILMING

"... outrageously funny... genuinely scary and refreshingly cast..."
Eric Braun - FILMS

"The film is enhanced by uniformly careful casting in the secondary roles... Mention must also be made of Rick Baker's werewolf make-up... (done) with the sort of effortless expertise that makes one, quite properly, forget the artistry."
John Pym - MONTHLY FILM BULLETIN

"This is a revolutionary movie. It pushes the art of the horror movie out into new areas."
John Brosnan - STARBURST

"The gear changes of tone and pace make for a very jerkily driven vehicle."
SUNDAY TIMES

"Curious but oddly endearing mixture of horror film and spoof, of comedy and shock..."
HALLIWELL'S FILM GUIDE

"Dynamite direction and script by Landis."
LEONARD MALTIN'S TV MOVIES AND VIDEO GUIDE

"To some extent... the film suffers from a split personality. But at times the two styles come fruitfully into conjunction..."
THE AURUM HORROR ENCYCLOPEDIA

"Confidentially walks the tightrope between spoof and genuine horror throughout. (The effects) are both incredible and convincing."
FANTASTIC CINEMA

"It's utterly entralling to watch the transformation - and you know movies can never be the same again. A ground-breaking movie to be remembered."
REVENGE OF THE CREATURE FEATURE MOVIE GUIDE

"... this may be the most successful attempt to mix horror and comedy there has been. The last couple of scenes... seem ill advised... but otherwise the picture is truly enjoyable and original."
GUIDE FOR THE FILM FANATIC

"At its very best when horror is mixed with a measure of grisly humour, the ending is a sad anti-climax."
ELLIOT'S GUIDE TO FILMS ON VIDEO

"... the combination of humour, horror and suspense is played off well. However, the climax... leaves much to be desired. AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON is an ambitious project from Landis that will... be remembered in the minds of the viewers."
NIGHTMARE THEATRE



David's victims become his judge and jury

with sits rather flatly with what's gone before, the previous mix of fun and frights evaporating to leave the (inevitably) tragic yet strangely unaffecting and unfulfilling finale.

But these can't really be considered serious flaws (what would have been, and Landis apparently had to fight Polygram to avoid it, is an open-ended conclusion leaving the way open for a predictable and hasty sequel) as no other mix of horror and humour has yet managed to match the artistic success of **AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON**.

Whether Landis can do it again is something we've waited a long time to find out, but we won't have to wait much longer as a follow-up - possibly to be titled **AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN PARIS** and offering the exciting prospect of reuniting many of the original cast, picking up their characters in the present - is currently in production, marking a long overdue return to the genre for Landis - a delay no doubt due to the tragedy surrounding his segment of 1983's **TWILIGHT ZONE - THE MOVIE** - and a rehabilitation that started earlier this year with a vampire film, **INNOCENT BLOOD** (unseen in the UK at the time of writing), and which will hopefully come to full fruition with his second lycanthropic outing. Over to you, John...

• With thanks to Ray Stewart for research material.

(Those of you who stay long enough with the closing credits will notice that Landis added his own personal tribute to the wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana and that the usual filmic disclaimer "All characters and events in this film..." has one additional word and reads "All characters and events in this film are fictitious. Any similarity to actual events or persons, living dead, or undead, is purely coincidental." - Ed.)

CAST & CREDITS

David Naughton (David Kessler); Jenny Agutter (Alex Price); Griffin Dunne (Jack Goodman); John Woodvine (Doctor Hirsch); Brian Glover (Chess Player); Lila Kaye (Barmaid); David Schofield (Dart Player); Paul Kember (Sergeant McManus); Frank Oz (Mr. Collins); Don McKillop (Inspector Villiers); Rik Mayall (2nd Chess Player); Sean Baker (2nd Darts Player); Paddy Ryan (First Werewolf); Anne-Marie Davies (Nurse Gallagher); Joe Belcher (Truck Driver); Colin Fernandes (Benjamin); Albert Moses (Hospital Porter); Kermit the Frog (Himself); Miss Piggy (Herself); Michelle Brisigotti (Rachel Kessler); Mark Fisher (Max Kessler); Gordon Sterne (Mr. Kessler); Paula Jacobs (Mrs. Kessler); Claudine Bowyer, Johanna Crayden (Creepy Little Girls); Nina Carter (Naughty Nina); Geoffrey Burridge (Harry Berman); Brenda Cavendish (Judith Browns); Christopher Scouler (Sean); Mary Tempest (Sean's Wife); Cynthia Powell (Sister Hobbs); Sydney

Bromley (Alf); Frank Singuinea (Ted); Will Leighton (Joseph); Michael Carter (Gerald Bringsley); Elizabeth Bradley (Woman in Zoo); Rufus Deakin (Little Boy with Balloons); Lesley Ward (Little Boy's Mother); George Hillsdon (News-vendor); Gerry Lewis (Man in Bus Queue); Dennis Fraser (2nd Man in Bus Queue); Alan Ford (Taxi Driver); Peter Ellis (Bobby in Trafalgar Square); Denise Stephens (Girl in Trafalgar Square); Christine Hargreaves (Ticket Lady); Bob Babenia (Usher); Ken Sicklen, John Salthouse (Bobbies in Cinema); John Altman, Keith Hodiak, John Owens, Roger Rowland (Assorted Police); "See You Next Wednesday" Cast - Linzi Drew (Brenda Bristols); Lucienne Morgan (Lance Boyle); Gypsy Dave Cooper (Chris Bailey); Susan Spencer (Georgia Bailey).

Written and Directed by John Landis; Produced by George Folsey Jr.; Executive Producers - Peter Guber & Jon Peters; Director of Photography - Robert PaynetrBS; Art Director - Leslie Dilley; Special Make-Up Effects Designed and Created by Rick Baker; Original Music by Elmer Bernstein; Edited by Malcolm Campbell; Financial Administrator - Sam Williams; Production Manager - Joyce Herlihy; First Assistant Director - David Tringham; Costumes Designed by Deborah Naddoolman; Casting - Debbie Williams; Stunt Gaffer - Alf Joint; Stunt People - Roy Olon, Vic Armstrong, Ken Barker, Dickie Beer, Marc Boyle, Sue Crossland, Clive Curtis, Peter Diamond, Tracey Eddon, Sadie Eden, Terry Forrestal, Romo Gomarra, Fred Haggerty, Frank Henson, Nick Hobbs, Billy Horrigan, Arthur Howell, Carla La Fong, Gareth Milne, Val Musetti, Terry Plummer, Greg Powell, Doug Robinson, Ken Shepherd, Colin Skeeping, Tony Smart, Rocky

Clapper/Loader - Michael Anderson; Grip - Dennis Fraser; Sound Mixer - Ivan Sharrock; Boom Operator - Ken Weston; Sound Assistant - Don Banks; Assistant Art Directors - Peter Childs, Keith Pain; Set Dresser - Simon Wakefield; Prop Buyer - Sidney Palmer; Property Master - Dave Jordan; Props - Brian Payne, Bill Hargreaves; Dressing Props - Tony Wheeler, Derek Ixer; Make-Up - Robin Grantham, Beryl Lerman; Hairdresser - Barry Richardson; Wardrobe Master - Ian Hickinbotham; Men's Wardrobe - Keith Morton; Women's Wardrobe - Sue Wain; Construction Manager - Len Furey; Supervising Carpenter - Fred Gunning; Carpenter - Len Day; Supervising Painter - John Roberts; Painter - Tommy Green; Supervising Rigger - Frederick

Crawford; Rigger - Tim Murphy; Supervising Stagehand - Vince Murphy; Stagehand - Michale Wells; Supervising Plasterer - Tom Tarry; Plasterer - Bill Grzesik; Associate Editor - Simon Battersby; Associate Editors - Steve Maguine, Clive Hartley, Anna Ksiezopolska; Dubbing Mixer - Gerry Humphreys; Sound Editors - Roy Benson, Rocky Phelan; Music Editor - Michael Clifford; Foley - Tony Lenny; Unit Publicist - Sara Keene; Stills - Barry Peake; Casting New York - Dee Dee Wehle; Casting Los Angeles - Michael Chinich; Producer's

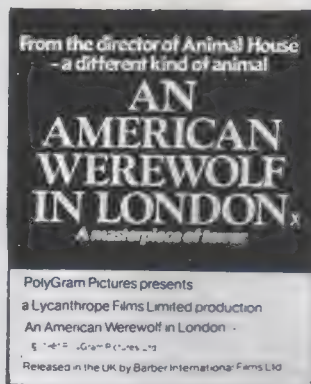
Secretary - Maggie Southam; Assistant Accountants - Derek Norwood, Linda Gregory; Gaffer - Maurice Gillett; Best Boy - Alan Barry; Electricians - Bill Nicholson, Toby Tyler, Peter Bloor; Genny Operator - Mickie Rowsome; Runner - Martin Ford; Action Vehicle Co-Ordinator - Dave Bickers; Special Effects - Effects Associates Ltd.; Optical & Titles - Camera Effects Ltd.; Lighting by Lee Electric Ltd.; Camera & Lenses by Joe Dunton Ltd.; Catering - First Unit Caters Ltd.; The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra Conducted by Elmer Bernstein; 'Blue Moon' Performed by Bobby Vinton Courtesy of Columbia Records; 'Blue Moon' Performed by Sam Cooke Courtesy of R.C.A. Records; 'Moondance' Performed by Van Morrison Courtesy of Warner Bros. Records; 'Bad Moon Rising' Performed by

Creedance Clearwater Revival Courtesy of Fantasy Records; 'Blue Moon' Performed by The Marcells Courtesy of Emus Records; Re-Recorded at Twickenham Film Studios, Middlesex; Color by Technicolor; The film-makers wish to thank - Mr. Jim Henson, Lilly Whites, Swan & Edgar, Claudgen Ltd., Wimpey International Ltd.; Mecco's Impressions of An American Werewolf In London Manufactured and Marketed by PolyGram Records; Filmed entirely on location in Wales, London and Twickenham Film Studios, Middlesex.

1981

Length : 8,793 ft.
Running Time : 98 minutes. (Video Running Time : 93 minutes)

A Lycanthrope Films Production.
PolyGram Pictures.
Released in the U.K. by Barber International Films.
PolyGram Video / Channel 5 Video / Spectrum.



"Look into my eyes..."

Taylor, Terry Walsh, Paul Weston, Nick Wilkinson; Special Make-Up Effects Crew - Elaine Baker, Doug Bestwick, Kevin Brennan, Tom Hester, Steve Johnson, Sean McEnrow, Joe Ross, Bill Sturgeon; Location Manager - Ray Freeborn; Production Assistant - Jennie Raglan; Second Assistant Director - Mike Murray; Third Assistant Director - Russell Lodge; Continuity - Pamela Mann; Camera Operator David Garfath; Focus - Jeff Paynter; Steadicam Operators - Robin McDonald, Malcolm McIntosh;



Who's visiting who?

SLOW DEATH BY HAZZINI

The John Brosnan Interview

THE CONTROVERSIAL CRITIC & FANTASY AUTHOR IN CONVERSATION
WITH STEFAN KWIATKOWSKI

John Brosnan was born in Perth, Australia in 1947. He came to England in 1970 and was soon reviewing films for SCIENCE FICTION MONTHLY, HOUSE OF HAMMER and other magazines.

1978 saw the first issue of STARBURST and he became a regular contributor. Issue 27 (1980) saw the start of his now famous trivia column, 'It's Only A Movie' (originally titled 'The Critic Strikes Back'). Now, twelve years on it's still there as a regular page within the magazine.

He has written a number of film reference books: MOVIE MAGIC (A history of special effects), FUTURE TENSE (a history of science-fiction films), THE HORROR PEOPLE (a profile of horror actors and directors), JAMES BOND IN THE CINEMA and his latest, THE PRIMAL SCREEN (1991), which is a revised and updated version of FUTURE TENSE. His novels include SKYSHIP, THE MIDAS DEEP, THE SKY LORDS TRILOGY and THE DIRTY MOVIE BOOK with Leroy Mitchell.

His other activities include: being a regular guest at SF and James Bond conventions and an Airship fanatic - he'll watch any movie that contains an Airship (four of his novels have featured them in their plots!). He also enjoys watching extremely violent films, drinking and admiring the talents of beautiful actresses like... Michelle Pfeiffer. Quite a guy...

Stefan Kwiatkowski: *The Hazzini, a genetic man-made killing machine, a product of the Gene Wars, in THE SKY LORDS trilogy is of course a homage to Harry Adam Knight's famous novel SLIMER - are there any others from famous SF/Horror films and novels?*

John Brosnan: Actually, I visualised the Hazzini as kind of like the alien in ALIEN but much thinner, with extra limbs and insect-type wings. ALIEN also provided part of the inspiration for SLIMER, along with THE THING and all my other favourite horror movies. SLIMER started out as a movie outline for a director called Norman J. Warren, but when the movie didn't happen we turned it into a novel. The basic idea behind SLIMER came from Richard Dawkins book, THE SELFISH GENE though I don't think he'd be flattered by the knowledge.

I found the concept of the Gene Wars very exciting. Do you plan, at some point, to write a novel, or series of novels, on the Gene Wars?

After writing THE SKY LORDS I wanted to write a novel set before the Gene Wars, more or less describing the build up of the Wars, but my editor at Gollancz wasn't keen on the idea and asked for a sequel to THE SKY LORDS instead. The novel I'm currently writing, THE OPOPONAX INVASION, is set in a future where the Corporations didn't go to war but formed an alliance instead. The Gene Wars also popped up in 'Below Zero', the last strip I wrote for 2000AD.

Did you think of any ingenious gimmicks for the promotion of your SKY LORDS books, like descending from an airship outside of Forbidden Planet for a signing session?

My then editor at Gollancz did consider hiring one of Alan Bond's Sky Ships to promote the publication of THE SKY LORDS but quickly changed his mind when he found out what it would cost!

We know how loony censorship is in this country, do

you think things will ever change?

I don't think the censorship situation in the U.K. will change for the better: witness the recent ludicrous business about the police claiming they'd broken up a huge video-nasty distribution ring whereas many of the 'obscene' videos they proudly put on display could be bought quite legally in Woolworths. I've heard rumours that John Major is in favour of more film and video censorship but that has yet to be confirmed.

What has happened to Harry Adam Knight, after three great horror/SF novels he hasn't written anything for ages - can we expect a new masterpiece from him soon?

Harry Adam Knight has just had a new novel published by Gollancz called BEDLAM. Unfortunately, it's in hardback only for the time being; the paperback won't be published until June 1993. No doubt you know that the author of TENDRILS and WORM, Simon Ian Childer, was really Harry Adam Knight in disguise.

You've tried your hand at writing film scripts, JAW-MAN being one of your most famous - what others have you done?

As I mentioned earlier, SLIMER started as a film outline. Some years ago someone optioned the film rights and had a screenplay written. The latter was terrible and I rewrote it at the end of last year. Now another producer is keen to do it, providing I make the inevitable changes. He intends to shoot it in the Philippines on a very low budget so I'm a bit dubious about the final result. I also wrote the screenplay for CARNOSAUR which Roger Corman will be filming this year. Alas, he is not using my screenplay. I've heard from a Hollywood contact who heard that "...it's currently in limbo while the script is being rewritten... they're dropping most of the plot and cutting the number of dinosaurs down to one, for budgetary reasons, of course...". Sobs!

MIDAS DEEP seems almost impossible to find, will we ever see it reprinted?

MIDAS DEEP wasn't exactly published but kind of secretly released into limbo! I think they cut the print-run down to some ridiculous level. It was impossible to find a copy in England but a friend mentioned later that he'd seen a big stack of them in a shop in Tel Aviv! I doubt if it will ever be reprinted as the Cold War background is a little out of date.

Can you give me your opinions of the SF novels of Iain Banks and Colin Wilson?

I'm a great admirer of Iain Banks' novels but I'm afraid I find Colin Wilson completely unreadable.

You once called Brian DePalma 'probably the finest American director at work today', do you still hold that opinion today?

I once called Brian DePalma 'probably the finest American director at work today'? I don't believe it! But really, while I still like most of his movies, I wouldn't now rate him among the top American directors. BONFIRE OF THE VANITIES, for example, was pretty disappointing.

Will you be contributing anything to Alan Jones' new magazine, SHIVERS?

I doubt it. No time.

Are you working on a new novel at the moment?

As I mentioned before, I'm working on THE OPOPONAX INVASION at the moment. It's a kind of off-beat space opera with a good old-fashioned invasion from outer space. As I'm way behind with it I have no idea when it will be published.

What are your favourite SF novels?

WAR OF THE WORLDS, THE KRAKEN WAKES, THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS, TIGER TIGER, 1984, THE FALL OF HYPERION, USE OF WEAPONS, THE SPACE MERCHANTS, THE DEMOLISHED MAN, THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE, DO ANDROIDS DREAM OF ELECTRIC SHEEP?, UBIK, THE VOYAGE OF THE SPACE BEAGLE, THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH and THE FUNGUS.

Are the C.O.C.A.H. (Conspiracy Of Critics Against Herbert) still active?

I fear that the C.O.C.A.H. had to be disbanded when we realised how much distress we were causing the sensitive, and highly talented, James Herbert.

Finally, can you please tell us your all-time ten favourite fantasy films?

Hmmmm, depends how you define 'fantasy'. I'd have to include horror movies in my personal definition... And as for favourites, that's a hard one. I guess I'd have to list THE HAUNTING... the first Hammer DRACULA, the first KING KONG, PETER PAN, A MATTER OF LIFE OR DEATH, THE 7TH VOYAGE OF SINBAD (for purely nostalgic reasons), ALL OF ME, RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK, HEAVEN CAN WAIT (second version), THE SHINING... and so on.

COMPETITION!!

To tie in neatly with this interview we have a signed set of John's SKY LORDS TRILOGY paperbacks to give away. To win this set just answer the following question:

THIS AUTHOR HIT THE BIG TIME WITH HIS LAST TWO NOVELS ABOUT SERIAL-KILLERS, BOTH MADE INTO SUCCESSFUL FILMS, BUT WHAT WAS HIS FIRST NOVEL CALLED?

Send your answer, name and address along to the editorial address, marking your envelope "SKY LORDS COMP", and the first correct answer drawn after 31st May 1993 will win. Good Luck!



REVIEWS OF THE PRINTED PAGE

CRONENBERG ON CRONENBERG

Edited by Chris Rodley (Faber & Faber, 1992. H/B: £12.99).

CRONENBERG ON CRONENBERG is another entry in Faber & Faber's short but already impressive series of books compiled from extensive interviews with their subject director and supplemented with introductory paragraphs to each chapter plus explanatory notes and a selection of b/w stills relevant to the text.

Editor Chris Rodley has compiled this volume from 6 major interviews conducted with Cronenberg over a 7 year period, the first in May 1984 and the last in March 1991, taking us from Cronenberg's formative years through the Cinepix years and the 1980's classics and up to and including the making of **NAKED LUNCH** - but not before an intriguing foreword by one Dr Martyn Steenbeck, a character who could have stepped straight out of a Cronenberg film.

Rodley's book offers a unique insight into the genius (and genesis) of a unique talent who has compromised little in presenting his highly individual vision to an unsuspecting and often unprepared world; and Cronenberg proves both willing and able to discuss his ideas, coming across as both highly intelligent and articulate, not to mention opinionated, as he discusses all facets of his life and art, allied to plenty of fascinating factual information about his film and television work - the book also offers a comprehensive, though not complete, film and t.v.ography - as well as revealing projects he worked on but never made (including **TOTAL RECALL** and despite spending a year shaping the existing script to his own vision) and the ones he was offered but declined to make - how do you like the sound of a Cronenberg directed **BEVERLY HILLS COP** (when it was still a Stallone vehicle), or **TOP GUN**, or **WITNESS**, or even, most bizarrely of all, David Cronenberg's **FLASHDANCE**?! Along the way Cronenberg also offers his opinions on everything from pornography to polymorphous sexuality and everyone from Nazis to film censors (explaining why they equate with psychotics) and Hitchcock to Scorsese (himself the subject of one of these volumes), while also touching on the contentious issue of his treatment of women in his films (not to mention his treatment by the women in his films - specifically an incident involving Barbara Steele during the filming of **SHIVERS**). Hell, the man even turns out to be a fan of Nic Roeg's **DON'T LOOK NOW**!

All of which makes **CRONENBERG ON CRONENBERG** by far the best and most comprehensive work yet written about the man and his films, and like any good book leaves you hungry for more, so savour every page as it's likely to be the nearest we'll get to a proper Cronenberg autobiography for quite some time...

Mark Murton.

DOING RUDE THINGS: THE HISTORY OF THE BRITISH SEX FILM 1957-1981

By David McGillivray (Sun Tavern Fields, 1992. S/B: £9.95).

Sun Tavern Fields, the publishers of Maitland McDonagh's **Dario Argento** book, have had the rather good idea of collecting together David McGillivray's series of articles that ran in the short-lived **CINEMA** magazine chronicling the history of the British Sex Film. McGillivray, who needs no introduction to readers of **FANTASYNOPSIS**, has lovingly re-vamped and added to those 1982 articles and delivered them into book format.

Commencing with an intro from nude starlet Pamela Green, in which she reveals that she was (and still is) a print finisher and re-toucher and that she not only appeared in those early nudie flicks but also had to skillfully re-touch the publicity photo's to remove any "offending bits"! the book dives into its first chapter: 'The Pioneers'. McGillivray states that "Today's censorship may appear to be tightening, but it is a model of enlightenment compared to the dark days of the fifties.", and goes on to talk about the early days of exploitation and catalogues such titles as **THE FLESH IS WEAK**, **A QUESTION OF ADULTERY** and **THE GARDEN OF EDEN**. These titles really got the ball rolling, then, in 1958 Britain produced its first "nudie", **NUDIST PARADISE**, produced by Nat Miller - however, all the actresses had to conform by shaving off their pubic hair! Director Stanley Long best summed up the early naturist films by saying, "It was absolutely taboo to imply anything to do with sex... Volleyball was always a great favourite because it used to make the tits bounce up and down."!!

Chapter 2 - 'The Legends', goes on to talk about the beginnings of the 'Carry On' series, the introduction of Stanley Long's 8mm 'home movies' and even reveals that Anna Karen (TV's Olive from 'On The Buses') used to be a stripper and Blue Peter's Valerie Singleton narrated the wildly titled **NUDES OF THE WORLD**!! This chapter also offers another startling revelation, Stanley Long actually photographed a third of Polanski's classic **REPUSSION** (uncredited) when Gilbert Taylor was forced to move onto another project because the controversial director was way behind schedule! Then the career of Brit-sex icon Harrison Marks is chronicled from his early classic of the genre, **NAKED AS NATURE INTENDED**, through to **COME PLAY WITH ME** for the Sullivan sex-empire.

'The Grafters' is the title of the third chapter and first discussed is the career of Derek Ford, the man responsible for **THE WIFE SWAPPERS**, a film that actually took more on its initial release than the 1991 re-issue of **SPARTACUS** and featured TV's Captain Birdseye! The quite brilliant Pete Walker is next put under the spotlight with discussions on his career and the reasons as to why he and McGillivray have not spoken since 1982. Time will tell as to whether this silence is broken as they are due to appear together at the 1992 Festival of Fantastic Films. I am always ready to read about Walker's classic 'terror movies' and it made quite a pleasant change to mull over titles like **SCHOOL FOR SEX** and the first 3D sex film **THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF GRETA**. (This segment was even more rewarding on a personal level as Mr. McGillivray even takes a couple of quotes from 'our' interview in issue 4!)

Chapter 4's 'The Final Days' charts the arrival of Norman J. Warren and Anthony Balch onto the scene and also discusses how the sex film gained respectability and attracted so many 'names' to the seventies sex-comedies. This chapter also looks at

the decline of the British sex pic and links its demise to the Conservative government and the introduction of video-tape allowing easy access to foreign hardcore porn.

Inevitably, one of the last film-makers to be looked at is David Sullivan (and his association with cult figure Mary Millington), who even after being jailed and fined remains the most financially successful of all the British sexploitation pundits.

The final chapter is suitably entitled 'The Aftermath' and the whole disappearance of the soft-core sex film is dealt with in great depth and is put across in an extremely intelligent manner (as is the rest of the book). One of the last remaining avenues for this kind of entertainment is the video cassette and the 'Electric Blue' series has been dominant (forgive the expression) for several years now, but Adam Cole, the producer, states that he thinks that the series will possibly only run for a few more volumes. This chapter culminates by discussing the new concept of the hugely successful male-striptease video, like **THE CHIPPENDALES**, etc., and the big demand for sex-education tapes, such as **THE LOVER'S GUIDE**, which masquerade as "in the public good" but actually feature some of the strongest sex scenes ever passed by the BBFC!

Sounds a good read, eh? Yes, it is, but the most enjoyable part of this well-illustrated tome is a thirty page appendix of a 'Who's Who' of the British sex-film scene and alphabetically lists all the major players and what became of them.

All in all, a first class examination of a genre that we may never see the likes of again and it will be of interest to those who fondly remember frequenting such screenings (with or without raincoat) and, more importantly, it gives a long overdue, in-depth study of an over-looked product that has made a lot of money and catered for public demand.

Highly recommended and a worthy addition to any film "buffs" library.

Paul J. Brown.

CLASSIFIEDS

FOR SALE: HORROR, SCIENCE FICTION, FANTASY & MAINSTREAM MOVIE MAGAZINES - Send a large SAE for catalogue, PAUL J. BROWN, 1 BASCRAFT WAY, GODMANCHESTER, HUNTINGDON, CAMBS, PE18 8EG.

WANTED: Any or all of 10-Part, 1982, Granada TV series of A KIND OF LOVING. Details and prices to: MARK MURTON, 5 ALBERT TERRACE, DRAKEWALLS, GUNNISLAKE, CORNWALL, PL18 9DU.

WANTED: The following magazines - SHOCK XPRESS #3, #5; DEMONIQUE #1, #2, #3; LITTLE SHOPPE OF HORRORS #1, #2, #3, #5, #6; THE JOHN CARPENTER FILE #1, #10; DEEP RED Premier Issue (not #1); MAGICK THEATRE #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #8. ALSO WANTED: The following books - JOE BOB GOES TO THE DRIVE-IN; THE CONSUMERS GUIDE TO CONTEMPORARY HORROR FILMS by Chas Balun (original version); AMAZING FORRIES; THE STORY BEHIND THE EXORCIST by Peter Travers & Stephanie Reiff; FAST & FURIOUS: THE FILMS OF AIP; THREE MEN AND A GIMMICK by Robert Hirst (1957); VINCENT PRICE Autobiography; OFF-HOLLYWOOD MOVIES by Richard Shorman; GUIDE FOR THE FILM FANATIC by Danny Peary; FAREWELL TO THE DRAGON (Bruce Lee Biography); WALT LEE'S REFERENCE GUIDE TO FANTASTIC FILMS Vol's 1, 2, 3. ALSO WANTED: Any interesting or rare horror videos and horror press-books with neat ad mats. Send your lists, prices and condition of items to: PAUL J. BROWN, 1 BASCRAFT WAY, GODMANCHESTER, HUNTINGDON, CAMBS, PE18 8EG.

Binford's Studio REVIEWS

12:01P.M. (1990)

Columbia Pictures.
Directed by Jonathan Heap
30 mins.

One of David Puttnam's few triumphs during his short three year stint as head of Columbia Pictures was the "Discovery Project" set up to give new people in the film industry their first stab at directing. 32 year old Jonathan Heap was one of the applicants and, after a rigorous selection process, he became one of six aspiring film-makers commissioned by the project. The result was **12:01 P.M.**, a 30 minute short adapted from a Richard Lupoff story by Heap, but later re-written by Stephen Tolkin at Heap's request. The film stars **ROBOCOP** villain Kurtwood Smith as Byron Castleman, a shy, quiet man who becomes trapped in an hour long time loop that begins at 12:01 P.M. with him standing on a traffic circle in the middle of a busy road. With only he being aware that the hour is repeating itself, he slowly comes to realize how banal his life has been, and apart from finally talking to a young woman (played by Laura Harrington) who he had seen every day in the park and had long wanted to approach, he is powerless to change it.

Great performances from Smith and Harrington, an intelligent screenplay, well achieved low key visual effects and Heap's assurance in handling both the actors and the film's pace and structure all combine to make **12:01 P.M.** a science-fiction masterpiece that deservedly received an Oscar nomination for best live action short. On the strength of this film, Heap is destined for great things even if his future does lie outside the sci-fi genre. My only hope is that his considerable potential is not squandered in television.

Daniel Stillings.

ALIEN 3 (1992)

Twentieth Century Fox.
Directed by David Fincher.
111 mins.

David Fincher, the director of this much, and I think unfairly, maligned follow up to **ALIENS**, is a man with much to offer, and with a real quality script he could emerge as a major talent.

But for now he's stuck with **ALIEN 3** where the parts are much better than the whole. Here we find Ripley (Sigourney Weaver) crash-landing on a forgotten quasi-religious penal colony, unaware that stashed aboard her escape pod is an alien egg.

Unfortunately, her human companions from **ALIENS**,

the adopted daughter Newt and Corporal Hicks, are killed in the crash. Fincher's style comes to the fore with a gruesome and yet mostly off-screen autopsy of Newt, complete with bone slicing sound effects! And to follow that, intercut with the poignant scene of the cremation of Newt, we have the shocking birth of the new Alien, stashed away in a dog (shades of Carpenter's **THE THING**?).

Soon, inmates are being picked off one by one, and with the help of medical officer Clemons (Charles Dance), Ripley tries to warn the prison governor, Superintendent Andrews (Brian Glover), of the deep shit they're now in.

Within half an hour, however, the film makes its first major mistake by killing off both Dance and Glover within minutes of each other, leaving no quality actors to support Sigourney Weaver, who looks more bewildered as the film goes on.

The middle third looks like the work of another director, with a lot of pointless and inane dialogue, plus an unnecessary over-abundance of 'realistic' language. I mean by the time you're on the tenth 'fuck' in the same scene, you realise that the scriptwriters have run out of fresh ideas.

It's only when Ripley discovers that she's been impregnated by an alien, presumably during hypersleep, that the film picks up pace, and David Fincher seems to have returned to the helm. The finale is reasonably exciting, with the prisoners setting themselves up as live bait, to lure the alien into a trap. The lack of sympathetic or three-dimensional characters, however, lessens the impact of the prisoner's deaths.

The final scene with the death of Ripley, is handled with care, and I'm sure Sigourney Weaver is happy to finally kill off a character who was in danger of becoming another invincible super hero/heroine.

Full marks to the set designers and art directors for creating a dark, damp, Dante-like vision, and despite signs of studio post-production tampering, plus a thumbs down to the script writers for not working hard enough on the dialogue, this is an impressive debut for David Fincher who deserves something a lot better. He should at least be given a round of applause, firstly for taking on the unenviable task of having to follow such respected works as **ALIEN** and **ALIENS**, and secondly for providing so much style out of such a poor script.

Simon Meade.

THE APPOINTMENT (1981)

First Principle Films
Directed by Lindsay C.Vickers
89 mins.

Starring Edward Woodward, **THE APPOINTMENT** opens with a report about a missing schoolgirl; but anyone expecting a potential rival to that tantalizing maze of terror **THE WICKER MAN** is definitely on the wrong track. This is a film out of its time, since it's the sort of programmer that would have been ideal 'bottom half of a double bill' fodder picture in the days when our cinemas still showed two pictures for the price of one. Indeed, so laboriously stretched out is

BINFORD'S RATING SYSTEM

- ⏮️ **REWIND:** Excellent! See it again and again!
- ▶️ **PLAY:** Great entertainment.
- ⏸️ **PAUSE:** Worth watching, but it's no classic.
- ⏭️ **FAST FORWARD:** Mediocre and hardly worth it.
- ⏮️ **EJECT:** Don't bother!

the story that it could all have been condensed into a considerably more effective 20-minute supporting short - aficionados of that particular form may be interested to note the name of Gregory Dark appearing as assistant director here.

The ever-professional Woodward plays a middle-aged executive, called away unexpectedly on business on the night he should be attending his gifted teenage daughter's violin recital. Plagued by nightmares involving vicious dogs, a car accident, and, strangely, apparent disaster caused by the release of his safety-belt catch, Woodward shrugs off the dreams and, promising to telephone after the performance and thereby discharge his parental responsibilities, sets off to his meeting. Naturally, his previous night's visions begin to come true, but not entirely in the way envisaged, and a tense final sequence finds him trapped, battered and bruised in the wreckage of his hired vehicle, desperately fumbling with his seat-belt yet unaware just how precarious a predicament he faces. A chilling final shot explains everything away in paranormal terms, suggesting his pubescent daughter's possible influence over not only these events but also the shocking opening scene in which a twelve-year-old schoolgirl is literally sucked out of existence by woodland spirits in an extremely impressive, deceptively simple display of 'how did they do that?' special effects.

Clever moments such as the first ominous appearance of the truck which menaces Woodward along his route are countered by unnecessarily lengthy scenes of humdrum everyday activity; the sight of Woodward tucking into a meal at a motorway service station is not a particularly edifying one, to say the least. By no means an essential appointment for you to keep, then, but along with the recent work of Dirk Campbell, Jim Groom, Alex Chandon and co., an encouraging sign that the British horror movie has not been brushed aside quite yet.

Darrell Buxton.

THE ARRIVAL (1990)

Braveworld.
Directed by David Schmoeller.
103 mins.

Max Page's 73rd birthday celebrations are interrupted by the arrival of a meteorite crashing at the edge of the old man's garden.

The next day some stuck-up government officials have the area taped off and usher away the curious Max (played by Robert Sampson), who sits on the outside peering in - then, without warning and quite unseen, something burrows towards him at great speed. The next thing, he screams, foams at the mouth and collapses.

At the hospital, Max is pronounced dead, but suddenly makes a miraculous and startling recovery in front of his grieving son!

That night while sleeping at the hospital, Max is plagued by strange dreams; meanwhile, the doctors run test after test.

Max is cared for by pretty young nurse Connie (Robin Frates), to whom the old codger reveals that "if I were fifty years younger...", but she tells him that she is about to move on to a new job in San Diego... As each day passes, Max's rate of recovery progresses at an alarming rate which continues to puzzle the hospital.

It's not long before Max is allowed to return home, but his dreams carry on and he develops a few odd habits, including a yearning for blood, and he actually appears to be getting younger!



"Oh, go on, no tongue this time, I promise" - **ALIEN 3**

Max informs his son about his awful dreams and confesses "I might be dangerous", he even thinks he is responsible for the death of a local missing woman. Then, on one of his nightly 'wanderings' he discovers the said woman's corpse, he then leaves the area... and so begins a gruesome trail of carnage with each newly discovered corpse drained of blood. Hot on the heels of this vampirish killer is FBI agent John Mills (John TENEBRE Saxon), who has a recent photograph of Max in which he appears to be about twenty years younger!

Mills soon links the meteorite crash and the killings together - meanwhile, we discover that Max can take a bullet or two, with no obvious signs of effect, and that he is now looking about twenty-something (cue another actor to take over - Joseph Culp)!

A trail of death ensues as Max travels across the country, until, in San Diego, he once again meets up with nurse Connie and romance blossoms.

Not far behind, agent Mills reveals all to the disbelieving Connie and he enlists her help to try and apprehend the inhuman serial-killer...

It's kind of like a restrained relation to **THE HIDDEN**, but, believe me, the similarity ends there, period! **THE ARRIVAL** offers a few unsettling images, but no really outstanding scenes or jolts and nothing special in the effects department to boot.

The main reason for its failure is the fact that they cast no-hoper Joseph Culp as the killer - he offers nothing to the part and becomes totally forgettable within minutes of his first appearance, giving a bland, one-dimensional performance! However, always good to watch is the consistent, reliable and versatile John Saxon who puts on a good show as the trailing FBI guy. Oh, and I almost forgot, Michael J. Pollard pops up in a cameo scene in which he's seen barbecuing muskrat!

PUPPETMASTER helmsman, David Schmoeller directs this in a workman-like fashion and only just keeps the pace at a watchable level, but, to give him some credit, he does manage to deliver a bit of tension in the finale (though sadly, he bows to the usual 'I never knew that was going to happen?' ending).

THE ARRIVAL came un-noticed and will most probably fade away into obscurity just like the actor who played the young Max Page... who was he again?

Paul J. Brown.

B.O.R.N. (1988)

Cineplex Home Entertainment.

Directed by Ross Hagen.

87 mins.

At the start of this film a teenage girl collapses on the beach and is rushed to hospital with a serious heart problem. The hospital also has a problem - no donor hearts are available and the girl only has 24 hours to live. The doctors suggest the black market or B.O.R.N. (which stands for Body Organ Replacement Network). The girl's parents agree and the hospital contacts the illegal organisation who then send a team out to 'find' a donor! The psychopathic donor team set off in search of a healthy young girl as per orders from their boss (P.J. Soles). Unfortunately for Buck Cassidy (Ross Hagen), three of his foster-daughters are outwalking home after a party, making them ideal targets for the donor squad who proceed to kidnap all three of them!

They are taken to a makeshift hospital in order for them to be later prepared for organ removal. This 'hospital' is populated by all sorts of perverts and struck-off doctors that are out to make a living any way they can!

Good old Buck managed to see the tail end of the kidnapping and goes off to the police for help; they offer none at all, simply dismissing the girls as runaways.

Buck has to go it alone and recruits the help of his friend Charlie Stack (Hoke Howell), a former policeman.

Can they save the girls from the ruthless money grabbing network before it's too late...?

Basically, who gives a toss?! This awful mess is populated by scum-sucking characters that only allow for one-dimensional performances, hell, there's

not even much in the way of gore to liven it up! Only two members of the cast are worth watching and they are both low-lives; William Smith as the Jack Palance look-alike chief surgeon and Russ Tamblyn as the head-honcho kidnapper, two of the most vile personalities you're ever likely to see on film.

Have you ever seen that episode from 'Police Squad' where Leslie Nielsen has a shoot-out with a girl who is only inches away? Well, the same thing happens in this pile of crud, only difference being is that these guys are taking it seriously!! B.O.R.I.N.G.!

Paul J. Brown.

BAD KARMA (1991)

Shape Shifting Films.

Directed by Alex Chandon.

35 mins.

Downtown suburbia and there's a barbecue going on at Dave's place with all the guests very welcome and enjoying themselves... There's a knock at the door and a couple of Hari Krishna guys appear, hang around for slightly too long, put more than their proverbial feet in the door and proceed to shape-shift into something definitely not human - Dave's parents get quickly disembowelled by the creatures who then continue to rip and slash their way through the guest list. Only two survive the savage onslaught, Dave and his girlfriend.

The distressed couple head to a friend's flat, which just happens to be the local S&M spanking house, for refuge, totally unaware that the Krishna gang have re-grouped and are hot on their trail.

It transpires that the bald headed followers are actually disciples of Kalimar - Lord of the Shape-Shifters - and they have just two more days before they can resurrect him and rid the Earth of the 'vulnerables' - all they fear are the notorious 'rednecks'!

The scene is soon set for a bloody and brutal finale... When sent this award-winning video for review, director, co-producer and writer, Alex Chandon, said "it would make a nice change to see a dud review". Well, I'm sorry to disappoint you Alex, but I really enjoyed every blood-drenched frame! Okay, it's very amateurish, the actors can't act and the script leaves a lot to be desired, but if we were talking a major studio production and a budget to match with professional actors, etc., then heavy criticism would be valid. As it stands Alex and his master of make-up and effects, co-producer Duncan Jarman (this guy has achieved outstanding gore effects, too many to list, on a *shoestring* - watch out Savini and co.!) deserve all the praise I and others can heap upon them. With **BAD KARMA** they have achieved in 35 minutes what most could not do in a lifetime. In their first attempt and with a budget that wouldn't buy some so-called directors lunch, Mssrs. Chandon and Jarman have mounted a positively superb showcase for their pure and raw talent.

I, for one, wish them all the luck in the world and look forward immensely to **DRILLBIT**, their next blood-soaked venture.

Copies of **BAD KARMA** can be ordered (over 18's only) from the following address (send an SAE for details): Alex Chandon, 29 Brookfield Mansions, 5 Highgate West Hill, London, N6 6AT, and don't forget to tell them FANTASYNOOPSIS sent ya!

Paul J. Brown.

BASKET CASE 3 : THE PROGENY (1992)

Braveworld.

Directed by Frank Henenlotter.

90 mins.

This third mutated instalment begins with a climax - the classic humping scene from **BASKET CASE 2** between the

grotesque Belial and his equally odd 'girlfriend' Eve - and continues to reprise the ending, with Duane (Kevin Van Hentenryck), the 'normal' one, graphically stitching his twisted twin back onto his side, "It's okay, we're together again!"

Cue credits and the new tale begins with Duane, sans Belial but sporting a straight-jacket and being comforted by Granny Ruth (Annie Ross), "Sewing him back on was not the answer..."

It transpires that Duane has been completely wacko for quite a few months and that a lot of changes have occurred at the freak house including the fact that Belial's 'cute' girl is about to give birth! Duane desperately wants to see Belial again, but the little critter won't come out of his basket.

The whole entourage of misshapen oddities climb "aboard" their bus and make a special trip to visit Uncle Hal, the only doctor Granny Ruth can trust to handle the rather "delicate" birth.

To while away their bus journey, Granny entertains her deformed troupe with an endearing rendition of 'Personality'!

They all arrive safely at Uncle Hal's just as Eve's waters break in true tidal wave fashion!

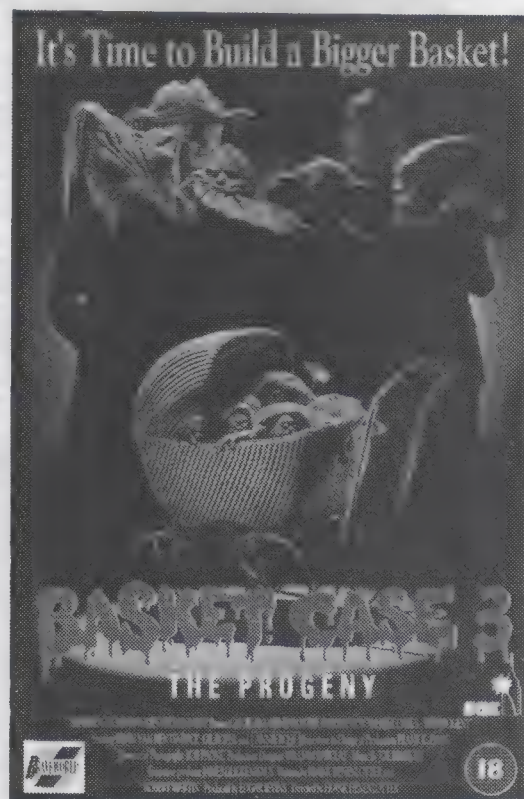
Hal welcomes them in and reunites Granny Ruth with her 'son', Little Hal, a giant multi-armed thingy that is going to assist in the birth (he also happens to be a clever doctor and inventor)!

As the delivery room is prepared, Granny removes Duane's straight-jacket and he immediately escapes, she also removes Belial from his wicker abode to witness the birth - at which point he goes absolutely crazy when he sees the doctor and mauls him badly. Duane heads off and meets up with the local sheriff's daughter.

Meanwhile, back at the birth, Eve spawns, not one, but twelve (count 'em!) mutated little Belials much to the joy of Little Hal as he videos the whole brilliantly wacky scene - remember, serious is not the key word here!

Belial is then brought back in to see his own little dirty dozen... Across town Duane is locked up in the slammer.

The local cops on duty realise that there's a million-dollar reward out on the Bradley boys and set off hot-foot to grab Belial for themselves - on peering in the window one of them proclaims, "Holy shit, there's a fucking convention of 'em!" as a celebration ensues, but they still enter the building in search of their twisted little goldmine. Once inside the cops blast



The UK video sleeve for BASKET CASE 3

Eye with a shotgun and kidnap the 'babies'. Belial goes crazy, while back at the jail Duane gets propositioned by the sheriff's domatrix-daughter who wishes to 'punish' him for his crimes! Belial then arrives at the police station in search of his babes and sets the scene for mutilation and murder and to finally be reunited with Duane... Sure, it's a parody of its original self, but I have to admit it, **BASKET CASE 3** is everything it *should* be and what I've come to expect from that twisted genius who is Frank Henenlotter! Very funny with way over-the-top performances and a witty script (co-written by Henenlotter and former Fango Ed, Bob Martin) to match, plus nasty and extremely gory when it needs to be.

There is no mistaking the fact that these characters really are Henenlotter's family and he works them with all the love and care of a doting parent, expertly moulding the players as easily as Gabe Bartalos manipulates his truly weird rubbery creations.

Lots of high points, including two great fantasy film homages in which Belial mirrors scenes from **THE TERMINATOR** (a gory assault on the police station) and the Sigourney Weaver-styled loader sequence from **ALIENS**, as the mutated midget battles in a home-built 'walker' of his own! But for me, the film's true gem was the actual 'birth' segment - a truly bizarre piece of film, too funny and, at the same time, grotesque for words - which is highlighted by a hilarious performance from Jim O'Doherty as 'Little Hal', wildly over-acting as he vids the whole strange affair!

The **BASKET CASE** series is an acquired taste, you either love it or loathe it, but either way you've got to admire the man's mixed-up mind - chalk up another victory for Henenlotter!

Altogether now, "Out come the freaks, out come the freaks..."

Paul J. Brown.

BELLE DE JOUR (1967)

Electric Pictures.

Directed by Luis Bunuel.

100 mins.

The Spanish surrealist Luis Bunuel made **BELLE DE JOUR** in France in 1967 which began the director's remarkable late meditation on the desire of the unconscious. All the more remarkable when one considers that Bunuel made **BELLE DE JOUR** when he was sixty-seven, and then went on to make five other French films. The last film in the oeuvre was **THAT OBSCURE OBJECT OF DESIRE** in 1977. All six films are currently available on video as part of The Bunuel Collection priced at £15.99 each, that display the brilliant hues of Eastman colour film stock.

In the film **BELLE DE JOUR**, Bunuel uses the camera as a dual function. Firstly to gaze at Catherine Deneuve as an object of desire and secondly Bunuel invites the audience to go beyond voyeurism and enter Severine's (Deneuve) sub-conscious as she lays on her bed, gazes into the camera and begins to dream. The audience hears the bells of a horse

drawn coach ring, in which Severine is a passenger. The ringing bells are a cue for the audience to prepare itself for a dream sequence, as repressed thoughts of the unconscious begin to resurface in the form of sexual masochism, at the hands of the coachmen. Bunuel like Freud realised the importance of setting free repressed feelings of desire that stem from the unconscious. The ego and the super-ego wrestle with the libido as they try to prevent the id's sex drive creating total chaos. Bunuel was an unrivalled master of overlapping fantasy and reality which mirrors the dual nature of our mind: the conscious and the un-conscious. Bunuel playfully blurs boundaries between what might be perceived as real and the unreal. In a self assured display of a smooth aesthetic between acting, cinematography and direction the camera effortlessly glides between memory, fantasy and reality.

The dual life of Severine as the devoted housewife who spends her weekday afternoons at a brothel and the seemingly masochistic fantasies that she develops of her husband as he sexually humiliates her become increasingly blurred by the end of the film. The viewer begins to wonder if in fact her life is nothing more than a dream. This is all the more perplexing due to Severine's playful and beguiling innocence that disguises suffering and inner turmoil. These particular emotions Deneuve chooses not to outwardly reveal. This led Le Monde to write in 1967, "One can't believe that such bad dreams could go on inside Catherine Deneuve's pretty head".

Nigel Arthur.

BODY PARTS (1991)

CIC Video.

Directed by Eric Red.

85 mins.

Criminal psychologist Bill Chruschank is involved in a horrendous car accident and, as a result, loses his right arm - however, the doctors carry out a daring new operation and graft a donor arm in place of his old one.

The operation is successful and all goes well... until Bill realises where the arm came from - a convicted mass-killer!

Bill becomes more and more paranoid about the fact that he has a murderer's arm and then starts to experience some violent mood swings.

After some investigations he discovers that two other accident victims have both been recipients of the killer's other arm and legs.

No one wants to listen to his problems until the killer, whose head has now been transplanted onto another body, returns to collect his parts....

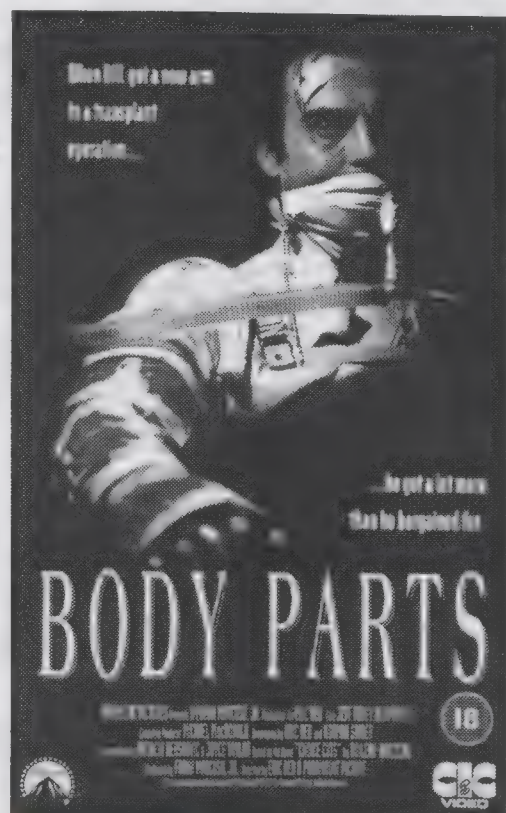
A good grisly chiller, like they used to make, that paces the shocks and suspense neatly together in quite a memorable little package (the film was denied a deserved UK theatrical release, probably due to the bad press against horror films at the time).

Director Eric (**THE HITCHER**) Red knows his craft well and generates excellent performances from his seasoned genre players; Jeff (**THE LAWNMOWER MAN**) Fahey is very good as Bill, Brad (you name it, he's in it) Doull crops up in a wonderfully twisted performance and Zakes (**THE SERPENT AND THE RAINBOW**) Mokae does the honours as the local policeman.

Quite a few meaty effects shots and one hell of a

manacled car chase sequence help to give **BODY PARTS** the thumbs up from me.

Paul J. Brown.



The underrated **BODY PARTS**

CANDYMAN (1992)

Polygram.

Directed by Bernard Rose.

98 mins.

From its title, you might think that **CANDYMAN** is a belated sequel to **WILLY WONKA & THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY** but in actual fact it's a filmization of the Clive Barker short story 'The Forbidden' and, as one US publication would have it, "the scariest film since **SILENCE OF THE LAMBS**". That statement isn't altogether true since **CANDYMAN**, despite its periodically chilling moments and admittedly frighteningly ingenious ideas, simply can't touch the Jonathan Demme Oscar-winning classic in the goose-bumps department. Yes, **CANDYMAN** will scare you in places. But not enough places.

The story centres around a student researcher named Helen (Virginia Madsen) who gets a lot more than she bargained for when she investigates the legend of the Candyman, a mythical hook-handed ghetto phantom whom she has summoned from her darkest dreams. The Candyman, a real sweetie, is the object of Helen's deepest desires and as soon as he physically manifests himself, you could say he makes a bee-line for her.

Director Bernard Rose (whose flair for arresting visuals is best exemplified in the subtly terrifying **PAPERHOUSE**) handles the grisly proceedings well and there is an undeniably weird hypnotic quality about his film, but, as is the case with most short story film adaptations, **CANDYMAN** is padded out with extraneous footage in an effort to lengthen its running time. 'Tis sad to relate, but in all honesty, **CANDYMAN** would have worked far better as a half-hour TV horror show than as a full-length fright flick.

Peter Benassi.



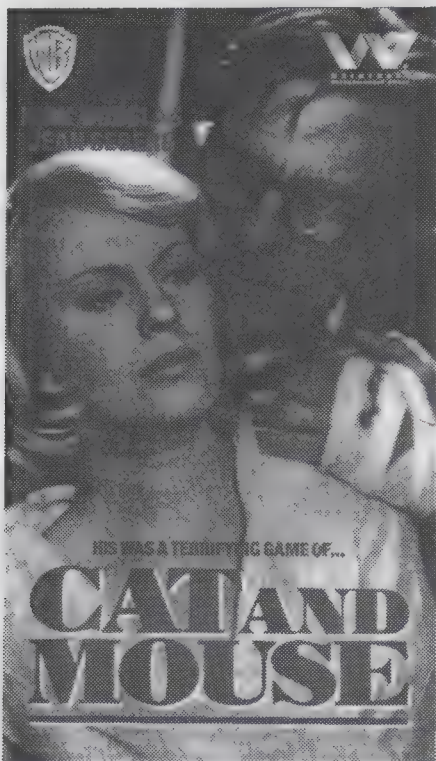
Catherine Deneuve being man-handled in **BELLE DE JOUR**

CAT AND MOUSE (1974)

Warner Home Video.
Directed by Daniel Petrie.
85 mins.

Routine and fairly bland sicko-thriller with the miscast Kirk Douglas portraying a biology teacher who flips his lid when his wife leaves him, takes his son and then later re-marries. We find out later that the son was never his anyway and that the marriage was one of convenience - an agreement - and that she was pregnant when they married. But poor old Kirk has really fallen in love with her and desperately wants his 'son' to carry his name. Pleading with his 'ex' does no good, so there's only one thing he can do - he murders a girl who takes pity on him in a laundromat with a handy razor! His ex-wife's new husband puts a private investigator on him as he still keeps bugging her - the PI proves to bit a bit of a nuisance though and also gets on the wrong side of ol' Kirk and falls victim to his knife. He then plans on getting the new husband out of their huge house leaving the wife all alone... Turgid, limp-dicked affair with no pay-off for those determined to stick with it!! Not worth a rental fee let alone the sell-through asking price!!

Paul J. Brown.



The awful CAT AND MOUSE

CHOPPING MALL (1986)

First Fright (First Independent)
Directed by Jim Wynorski.
75 mins.

Made before **ROBOCOP** this low-budgeter from the reliable Jim Wynorski takes on the premise of security robots, installed in a shopping mall, to protect the stores and goods from all intruders. Nothing is supposed to go wrong, but inevitably, as in all good robot films, it does... During an electrical storm the mechanical minders take a power surge and develop killer instincts, which is very unlucky for the four horny meathead couples, who have decided to stay behind after closing for a bit of private partying... Like the sleeve says, "...they slash their prices and their customers!!"

A well directed little actioner with a plot that, although borrowed heavily from other sources, adds much in the way of old-fashioned entertainment, as do the performances of the familiar ensemble of B-movie

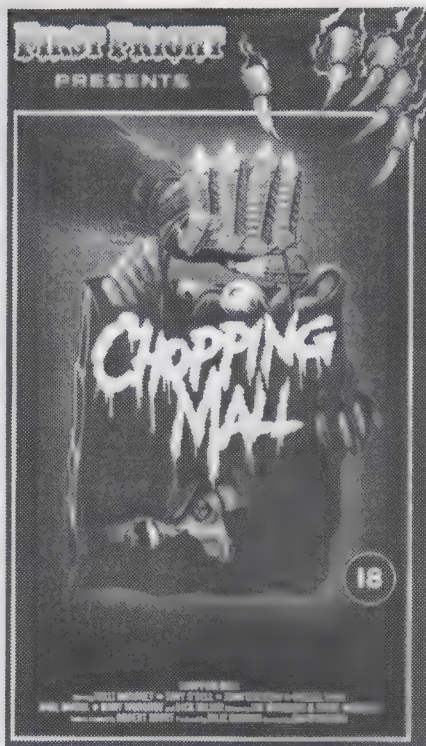
favourites - Paul Bartel, Mary Woronov, Dick Miller, Barbara Crampton and Kelli Maroney.

Speaking in tones uncannily like Peter Weller's Murphy in **ROBOCOP**, these raving robots, or 'killbots', take no prisoners and are not shy about dealing out very generous helpings of grue - one of the best scenes involves an exploding head, shown in full graphic detail. (Tell me Mr. Ferman, how did this stay in when a very similar scene from another horror film, also staged in a shopping mall, was excised completely?) The robots actually look like a cross between No. 5 in **SHORT CIRCUIT** (hey, didn't he go haywire after being struck by lightning?!) and the martian war machines in George Pal's **WAR OF THE WORLDS** and have been crafted by Rob Short - they function but do tend to look a little too wobbly and weak at times.

Like I said, **CHOPPING MALL** does borrow from other movies, especially Romero's **DAWN OF THE DEAD**, but it doesn't really matter as it's made all the more palatable by being condensed into just a seventy-five minute running time, which showcases the action and forsakes the dialogue - when you consider that it features lines like "I guess I'm just not used to being chased around a mall in the middle of the night by killer robots!" maybe that was indeed a wise decision!

If you like low-budget action, lots of screaming, plenty of boobs and a serving of gore then **CHOPPING MALL** is definitely worth taking to the check out. "Have a nice day."

Paul J. Brown.



Scenes from a mall

humanly possible. He gets shot, slashed, beaten and even crucified along the way, but, sadly, it is all encased in a waler-thin plot hindered even more by meaningless dialogue, and is ultimately for Van Damme addicts only.

In the end there is absolutely no point displayed for all the death and brutality on screen - **CYBORG** merely goes through the motions of trying to be human and ends up looking like a computer generated attempt at real life. Next please...

Paul J. Brown.

CREEPOZIDS (1987)

Bad Taste Video.
Directed by David DeCoteau.
75 mins (actually timed at 69 mins?!)

Zero-budgeted after-the-bomb-monster-on-the-loose flick in which an unlikely band of deserters/survivors take refuge from the deadly acid rain in a seemingly deserted shelter.

However, once inside they find out that the acid rain would've been a whole lot kinder to their skin than the claws and teeth of the giant rats and genetically engineered creature that lurk within!

With an **ALIEN/ALIENS**-style plot, but with a budget of around \$10, the action gets underway and the movie tries very hard to promote itself from the ranks of the lower divisions into the big boy's premier league. To tell you the truth, it almost pulls it off! Some of the gore/grue effects are quite effective, but they get somewhat let down by the dreadful inanimate rats and the dimestore reject **ALIEN**-type monster. Having said that, they are soon forgotten when a mutated baby makes an appearance.

The acting is pretty low-calibre, which comes as no surprise when you note that Linnea Quigley has top billing - but, if you're into Linnea, or would like to be, she does doff her vest and take a soapy shower! Cheap and tacky it may be, but I quite enjoyed it!

Paul J. Brown.

CYBORG (1989)

MGM/Pathe Video.
Directed by Albert Pyun.
80 mins.

Somewhere in the plague-ridden future a 'female' cyborg, who has the secrets of the 'cure' planted within 'her', gets abducted by a vicious gang of head-lopping street-warriors known as the 'Flesh Pirates'.

The leader of the 'Pirates', an unscrupulous character called Fender, wants to retrieve the cyborg's data so that he can become a 'God'!

Onto the scene comes Jean-Claude Van Damme as a 'slinger' who, not only wants to fight to keep humanity alive, but also has an old score to settle with the evil Fender.

The 'muscles from Brussels' kicks and beats bad-butt by the score in a supreme effort at displaying as much machismo as is

humanly possible. He gets shot, slashed, beaten and even crucified along the way, but, sadly, it is all encased in a waler-thin plot hindered even more by meaningless dialogue, and is ultimately for Van Damme addicts only.

In the end there is absolutely no point displayed for all the death and brutality on screen - **CYBORG** merely goes through the motions of trying to be human and ends up looking like a computer generated attempt at real life. Next please...

Paul J. Brown.

THE DEAD PIT (1989)

Colourbox.
Directed by Brett Leonard.
97 mins.

At the State Institution for the Mentally Ill the crazy Dr. Ramzi is performing a host of grisly and barbaric experiments on the patients and then dumping the bodies under the hospital in the 'dead pit' of the title. His colleague, Dr. Swan, is appalled to discover the dippy doc 'hard at work' one day and confronts him, to which Ramzi replies "I've done life, now I'm doing death". Swan shoots Ramzi in the head and seals off the pit.

Twenty years later and Dr. Swan is now the head of the hospital and a pretty young amnesic suffering woman is admitted. The admission seems to spark off a series of events - an earthquake shakes the hospital and what was dumped into the deadly pit decides to rise. Swan suddenly recalls his dying colleagues last words, "You can't kill me!"...

Superb asylum settings, plenty of wailing and crashing gongs, etc., help to give **THE DEAD PIT** a grotesque and macabre atmosphere but sadly this isn't quite enough to put it on par with Romero's **DAY OF THE DEAD** which is where it would dearly like to be.

It's not short on gore as the red stuff is ladled out quite liberally and the zombie make-ups are neatly applied, it just loses a lot in terms of acting and direction - shame really, as it could've shaped up into something really gratifying.

On the plus side, the numerous shots of the attractive Cheryl Lawson racing around in her underwear helped to raise the interest no end!

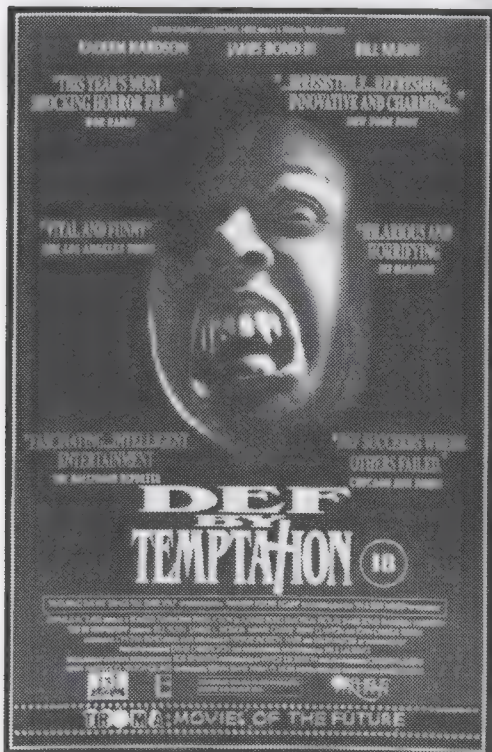
Paul J. Brown.

DEEP SPACE (1987)

Entertainment In Video.
Directed by Fred Olen Ray.
90 mins.

Only Olen Ray could set a film called **DEEP SPACE** in California! The title has absolutely nothing to do with this story of cops Charles Napier, Ron Glass and Ann Turkel battling bureaucracy as they investigate a series of vicious deaths perpetrated by a scaly monster created by U.S. military scientists. Pretty boring apart from Napier's familiar redneck act (his character here keeps a photo of Charles and Di on a dartboard!) and the exciting finale involving, surprise, a chainsaw...
Best line? Big Charlie's "I'm gonna kick monster ass!"

Darrell Buxton.



DEF BY TEMPTATION - quite possibly Troma's greatest pic

DEF BY TEMPTATION (1990)

Similar.
Directed by James Bond III.
95 mins.

Troma's own answer to **BOYZ 'N THE HOOD** and **NEW JACK CITY** is not quite the tacky trip you'd expect from Messrs. Kaufman and Herez. **DEF BY TEMPTATION** is an extremely effective all black horror story centred around a beautiful demonic temptress who is preying on men in New York City bars.

One such man to fall under her spell is Joel, a young evangelist, who is in town to visit his best friend 'K'. When 'K' becomes worried about his pal he decides to enlist the help of an undercover investigator before it's too late...

DEF BY TEMPTATION is a triumph of terror for the boys at Troma! A modern horror film with plenty of traditional values blended into a fiery cocktail of pain and pleasure. **DEF** is an erotic feast of fear that is a treat for both the eyes and ears. An impeccable cast of unknowns deliver a silky smooth script over a soulful soundtrack which when laced to the striking photography and James Bond III's creative and assured direction makes **DEF** a winner on all levels. The make-up is on par with the rest of the film and is used sparingly with greater attention being paid to the sparky script and old-fashioned lighting techniques.

Troma it is, but Troma it 'aint, if you know what I mean?!

Paul J. Brown.

DISTURBED (1990)

Warner Home Video.
Directed by Charles Winkler.
94 mins.

Silver-haired **FANTASYNOPSIS** fave Malcolm McDowell plays Dr. Derrick Russell, chief shrink at the local nut-house. Enter into the establishment a new patient, Sandy Ramirez (Pamela Gidley), a former model and a real mixed-up girl. She makes advances towards the doc and when he touches her she freaks out. Later that same night our Malcolm abducts her from her room and attempts rape, however, things go awry for him and the drug he pumps her with is penicillin, which she is allergic to, and she goes into convulsions. Then Michael (Geoffrey **SALEM'S LOT** Lewis), one of the more intelligent (!) patients, busts in on them and suggests that they kill her, to which the wacky-doc agrees.

Next morning things go from bad to worse as Malcolm is shocked to find that the girl's body has mysteriously disappeared. Inevitably, he starts to panic, then he starts to hear and see her all over the place and gradually slips into a state of total paranoid madness!

Is it all in his guilty mind or is it a case of someone trying to drive him over the edge? A reasonable attempt at very black humour helped by the central performance of Mr McDowell, who is good, as always, to watch even though at some points he goes a little (no, make that a lot) too far and plays the part like Basil Fawcett on acid!

The rest of the cast do the right thing by keeping straight faces, which adds to the wackiness of it (Priscilla (**BLUE VELVET**) Pointer is good as a sadistic nurse and regular screen nut-houser Irwin Keyes goes suitably over the top).

The crazy camera angles are at times exciting as is the gory scene with Malkie making love to a headless corpse!!

Definitely worth a rental if you can ignore the gaping plot holes.

Paul J. Brown.

DO DETECTIVES THINK? (1927)

Virgin Archive Video.
Directed by Fred Gioul.
20 mins.

As a massive fan of Laurel and Hardy, and of classic-era fright films, for as long as I can remember, I've tried to do my bit to argue the case for Stan and Ollie as masters of the horror-comedy. It's generally been accepted that Bud Abbott and Lou Costello rule the roost in this particular sub-genre, with the occasional voice crying out in favour of Bob Hope, but the sheer quality of Stan and Babe's marvellous short films surely gives them pride of place. In an article written some years ago for another fanzine, I cited such examples as **HABEAS CORPUS**, **BABES IN TOYLAND** and **DIRTY WORK** as key examples of sinister silliness in the Laurel and Hardy filmography; I'm delighted to say that I recently encountered a further fine combine of fun and fear starring the boys, the 1927 silent two-reeler **DO DETECTIVES THINK?**, which, since it appears to have been neglected by most genre reference books, I thought I might bring it to your attention here.

Judge Fozzie (sly, balding, moustachioed Scot James Finlayson, a regular in Hal Roach productions) convicts the hulking, mean-looking psychopath The



Malcolm McDowell looking every inch the part in **DISTURBED**

Tipton Slasher' to a lengthy prison term. The Slasher vows to escape from chokey and murder the man who has condemned him - Finlayson, king of the double-take, manages one of his most outrageous reactions when he spies a newspaper headline confirming that the killer is loose, spluttering about a half a gallon of coffee over his breakfast table! There's only one course of action open to the judge - he hires a couple of bodyguards, but unfortunately winds up with Stan and Ollie. Even as they venture towards his home, passing a spooky graveyard (later the setting for their 1928 body-snatching farce **HABEAS CORPUS**) and being scared out of their skins by the shadows of Stan himself and a satanic-looking goat, the boys don't exactly inspire confidence - what chance will they have against the fiendish, grinning slasher as he stalks Finlayson's mansion armed with a vicious-looking knife and gleaming scimitar?

The comedy high-spots include a 'headless' Stan being chased around the dining room by the crazed killer; Stan managing to trap the maniac in a closet where the terrified Ollie is already cowering; and the wonderfully contrived finale with Finlayson wrapped in a white sheet and with an ornamental mask accidentally jammed on the back of his head, appearing as some kind of demonic apparition! Great fun - if you want to check it out, **DO DETECTIVES THINK?** is available as part of the Laurel and Hardy Video Collection on sale in all good stores (as they say on TV) - you'll find it on the same tape as the hilarious **ANGORA LOVE** and **WRONG AGAIN**, both highly recommended, and with the latter featuring a gag which may appeal to fans of **SOCIETY**'s infamous shower scene...

Darrell Buxton.

THE DREAMING (1988)

Medusa.
Directed by Mario Andreacchio.
86 mins.

Professor Thornton (Arthur Dignam) discovers an ancient Aboriginal burial site (oh, I forgot to tell you that it's an Australian production) and removes a sacred bracelet, but as he touches it he sees a strange vision of a girl being hunted by members of

a barbaric whaling team.

The artefacts uncovered at the site are put on display at a museum and a group of young black activists steal the bracelet. A girl puts it on and has to be rushed to hospital with terrible injuries. The doctors, lead by Cathy Thornton (Penny Cook), the Professor's daughter, try to save the girl but it is too late.

Cathy touches the bracelet which then triggers off a weird spate of terrifying hallucinations. The Professor is drawn back to the site and is followed by Cathy...

Well, what can I say? **THE DREAMING** has some very nice Australian coastal scenery and few good effects, such as an X-ray picture with a life of its own and a couple of impalings, but really nothing else to offer! It's all a bit of a mish-mash with no real point to it - they would have fared a lot better if they had exploited the ghostly whalers more. Never mind. However, I did discover why it was called **THE DREAMING**... Inevitably, I fell asleep!

Paul J. Brown.



DRIVING FORCE (1989)

Medusa.

Directed by A. J. Prowse.
87 mins.

Yet another variation on the tried and tested road-war theme in which the story revolves around a gang of men who drive tow-trucks and scavenge accidents for commission - a wreck a day or you're out! One particular gang is known as the 'Black Knights', three sadistic men who will resort to anything for money - they rig accidents and force half-dead road crash victims to sign away their wrecked vehicles! Enter Steve O'Neill (Sam Jones), a widower (his wife was also a car crash victim) who is left to support his seven-and-a-half-year old daughter. He needs work and gets a job with the tow-truck people and, in doing so, poses a big threat to the 'Black Knights'. Nelson (Don Swayze), the leader of the gang, swears to kill the new boy and does all he can to get rid of him (since he has just found out that he's dying of cancer he figures that he has nothing to lose anyway!). As a result Steve gets badly injured in an 'accident'. However, Nelson will not stop and tries to destroy all that Steve holds precious - his daughter, his friends, etc.

Steve is forced back onto the road in a newly constructed rig and is set for a final showdown with the vicious 'Black Nights'...

Anyone out there ever see an old British b/w pic called **HELL DRIVERS** with Stanley Baker and Patrick McGeehan? In a way this is like an updated version, with tow-trucks taking the place of dumper-trucks.

DRIVING FORCE is an odd little actioner that isn't exactly sure what it wants to say or be - it could have been a very gruesome affair had it lived up to its first few minutes, which are pretty grim and quite unsettling, but it settles down to very much routine stuff and for the most part remains fairly uninteresting. Had it stuck to the dark side of things then I'm sure that this would have developed an underground following. With things being they way they are all we are left with is square-jawed Sam Jones in the lead role, who, I'm sad to report, still hasn't improved any since his big break in **FLASH GORDON**! Don Swayze (Patrick's bro) as the film's main villain is suitably repellent and is much more worthy of a better hero! Basically, it's all been done a hundred or so times before and usually better than this. If you get the chance, try and track down **HELL DRIVERS** instead!

Paul J. Brown.



THE FIEND (1971) (aka. BEWARE THE BRETHREN)

Gold Star.

Directed by Robert Hartford-Davis.
87 mins.

After a well out of place musical intro, in which a

possible member of 'The Young Generation' croons in true seventies tradition along to the evangelical rantings of Minister Patrick Magee, a girl is shown being brutally murdered, in a series of cruel juxtapositions with a baptism, by, as the local police inspector calls him, a "fly bastard".

It soon transpires that this killing is the third with the same m.o. and that the "fly bastard" is none other than Kenny (Tony Beckley), a crazed security guard and part-time swimming pool attendant who is firmly tied to his sick mother's, Birdy (Ann Todd), apron strings. In turn, Birdy's life is completely dominated by the Minister, to such an extent that she's even had part of her house converted into a chapel so the 'Brethren' can meet.

It seems that our sick killer also has the habit of tape-recording his conversations with his victims and that his mum has a rough idea of what he is up to. "You're doing God's work" she tells him and the deaths carry on.

A new district nurse visits the mother and she becomes worried about the old girl's involvement with the weird religion and asks her flatmate, who is a local newspaper journalist, to investigate; she agrees and arrives at the chapel's door posing as a desperate girl.

Still the killings continue.

The final straw comes when the Minister finds out that Birdy has to take regular insulin to survive and he refuses to administer the drug to her which sends Kenny over the edge completely.

A passable foray into the world of nutty religion, seventies ideas and crazy killing with the solid British cast working hard at trying to hold the weak script and lethargic direction together. It's one of those films that you could easily ignore but one has to continue viewing on a purely curios-level as the inclusion of the cabaret-style 'songs' adds a strange quality to this piddling, but, all the same, quite nasty production. **THE FIEND** looks like it should have been shot by Pete Walker, who I'm sure would have delivered a much stronger sermon.

Paul J. Brown.



FRIGHT (1971)

Warner Home Video.

Directed by Peter Collinson.
84 mins.

A nervous Mrs. Lloyd (Honor Blackman) welcomes the baby-sitter, pretty student Amanda (Susan George), into her house to look after her three-year old son.

Amanda gets acquainted with the child and then Mr. Lloyd (George Cole) settles her into the house.

Mrs. Lloyd seems very edgy and jumpy. Amanda asks if they are going out to celebrate an anniversary. "Well, sort of..." says Mrs. Lloyd and away they go leaving the pub telephone number in case of emergencies.

Amanda makes herself at home, unaware that a peep is keeping an eye on her and her knee-length wet-look boots (well it is 1971!).

She hears a noise outside but it's only the wind moving a clothes-line around. She settles back down only to be disturbed again; this time it's the little boy wanting a story. Then she gets a visit from her purple-flared trouser wearing boyfriend, Chris (Dennis Waterman), and Amanda assumes that it was him who was making the noise outside.

We then discover that Mr. Lloyd isn't really Mrs. Lloyd's husband, and that her real spouse, Brian Hellston (Ian Bannen), is in fact locked away in the nut-house for trying to kill her, their son and finally himself, and the reason for the evening's celebration is in honour of their divorce!

Amanda and Chris are disturbed by Mrs. Lloyd's phone call to check if everything is okay. Chris tries to mess up the phone call and Amanda throws him out of the house.

However, Chris hangs around to watch Amanda in an upstairs window, he hears a noise and gets brutally beaten by an unknown attacker!

Feeling a bit fed up, Amanda switches on the TV and settles down to watch **THE PLAGUE OF THE ZOMBIES**!

As the front door-bell rings the camera flashes back

to the pub celebrations (giving us a much needed glance at how people used to 'get down' in the early seventies!), and Amanda, thinking that Chris has come back, tells him to go away and pulls back the curtain, revealing a stranger's face. She tries to phone Mrs. Lloyd, but the stranger yanks the cord from the wall, leaving Amanda isolated in the old dark house. It seems that Mr. Hellston has pre-empted Michael Myers and has chosen this night to come home...

A lot of very British accents and a smattering of seventies fashions help to give this nutter-on-the-loose pic a flair (or should that be flare?) of its own and it simply *must* have been the inspiration for Carpenter's **HALLOWEEN** (there's even a Dr. Loomis-type character who tries to get his patient to surrender!)?

The acting is of a reasonable quality with Ian Bannen on form as the escaped loon (remember those trousers too?). Susan George looks good as she always does, especially when shown to be terrified (she somehow has the mouth for it), but her initial whimpering is a little too over the top. Honor Blackman also gives 100% as the tortured wife. Also worth catching if you are a fan of TV's **MINDER** as Dennis Waterman and George Cole make an early appearance together.

Some of the photography is a little too dark for TV but it still manages to conjure up an air of menace. Not brilliant stuff, but it is still effective and is a nice way to be nostalgic about the seventies. Now, where did I leave my Afghan coat?

Paul J. Brown.



GALAXINA (1980)

Guild Home Video.

Directed by William Sachs.
95 minutes.

This inept and inane low-budget sci-fi spoof from writer-director William Sachs would surely, and quite deservedly, have been long forgotten by now if not for the fact that the title role is taken by 'Playboy's' 1979 Playmate of the Year, Dorothy Stratten, who was subsequently murdered by her boyfriend the very night the film premiered (everyone's a critic!). Stratten plays a 31st Century robot who pilots the good ship Infinity while Captain Butt (an early indication of the level of humour to expect) and his crew are in hyper-sleep.

Awoken from their slumbers and interrupted from their usual occupation of patrolling the busy space lanes, Butt & co. are ordered to set course for the planet of Alta 1 to acquire the mysterious 'Blue Star' gem; a journey that will take 28 years, allowing (unfortunately) plenty of time for send-ups of both biker movies and westerns (with a shoot-out in the town of Custard's).

Last Stand - laugh? I never thought I'd start) as well as attempting to parody all the predictable sci-fi targets with equally predictable results that all fall woefully short of the mark (not to mention the conceit of trying to satirise far superior films in one so patently lacking any original ideas or invention of its own).

The increasingly juvenile attempts at humour grow ever more tired and tiresome and occasionally even offensive (no mean feat for such a vapid piece of movie making), yet the inclusion of some swearing and a few bare breasts indicates that it was aimed at an adult audience.

Sachs' lame script is matched by his own limp direction which in turn is reflected by the listless, uninspired performances of the whole cast, with no-one seemingly interested enough to even try and give a decent performance - so it's probably unfair to judge Stratten on the strength of this performance, especially as she plays a robot, but suffice to say that when *Galaxina* reprogrammes herself (itself?) to reciprocate the feelings of one of the crew who has fallen in love with her there is no discernible change in her acting (hardly a capital offence though).

All in all, definitely one to avoid, doubly so for Stratten fans (and if Peter Bogdanovich really was in love with her he should have bought and burnt all prints of this turkey which does her memory no favours), and my feelings the night I watched this

trite and trivial little film can best be summed up by the one (unoriginal) line that did manage to raise a smile: "I've had a great time - but it wasn't tonight!"

Mark Murton.

HENRY : PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL KILLER (1986)

Maljack Productions.

Directed by James McNaughton.

83 mins.

A sunlit face, staring past the camera, eyes fixed. Backtracking, we soon realise those eyes will never again see the sun, belonging as they do to a young girl, naked, dead and apparently gutted. A man smoking in a diner, exiting, but not before complimenting the waitress on her lovely smile. Another body, a girl splayed out on a toilet, underwear in disarray, a bottle sickeningly rammed up through her jaw, exiting her mouth. The man getting into a car, then another set of bodies. It is with these jarringly shocking juxtapositions that director John McNaughton's powerful and controversial **HENRY : PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL KILLER** opens, and with which the viewer is quickly immersed in the psychology of possibly the cinema's most convincing sociopath.

Henry (an astonishing performance by Michael Rooker), is an aimless drifter, living in a sleazy apartment block with his friend Otis (Tom Towles), and the film opens with the arrival of the third main character Becky (Tracy Arnold), Otis' sister, who is running from emotional problems and about to land in a situation far worse than she could believe. It very quickly becomes clear that the bodies scattering the opening sequence are the end-products of Henry's boredom, if you will, an ordinary Joe who just happens to kill at random and repeatedly because, as he later tells Otis, "Look at the world, it's either you or them!" One of the many strengths of this remarkable film is that initially it is Otis who comes over as the most unpleasant character, with his leering face, cruel taunts, drug peddling to schoolboys and sexual adoration of the same, while it is Henry who appears outwardly on the level, so that the growing attraction between Becky and her brother's flatmate becomes all too plausible. Gradually, Henry sucks Otis into his games of random executions, night-time prowls of the city in which prostitutes get their necks broken in the backs of their car, helpful motorists are gunned down in cold blood (Otis' 'blooding ritual'), and all the time poor Becky remains blissfully unaware of the danger around her. Swapping painful memories of her abused childhood with Henry over a game of cards in return for knowledge of exactly why he was incarcerated for killing his own mother ("My mamma was a whore, but I don't fault her for that..."), her deepening attraction to him and alienation from her brother Otis in the wake of his incestuous advances towards her, leads events toward a one-way ending of death, and it is here that director McNaughton punishes the viewer with a no-win situation. Returning from a night-time sojourn for some cigarettes, Henry finds Otis violently raping his own sister Becky and,

in the brutal fight that follows, Becky partially blinds Otis with a steel comb and sits in mute shock watching Henry painfully knife her brother to death on the floor. Hysterical, and wanting to call the police, she has to endure Henry's dismemberment of Otis in the bathtub, as does the viewer, after which she finds herself on the run with her unlikely protector. In a muted and stunned exchange during their following car flight, Becky confesses her love for Henry, to which he grudgingly and disbelievingly admits his feelings for her, love which then blossoms into the only end-product of release he knows... Rarely has the cinema seen a bleaker, more soul-destroying ending.

From its cool, almost detached style of filming, with the camera gliding, panning and tracking through the grisly tableaux in the manner of a sickened fly-on-the-wall, to its astonishingly assured performances, McNaughton's directorial debut is in a class of its own, and shows the true power of artistic integrity and talent over inflated budgets and super-egos. It is perhaps in its intelligent use of murder that the film is at its most stunning, as rarely do we see a killing; instead, we witness its aftermath, real, painful looking, messy, while the soundtrack reverberates with the last gasps of the dying and the sounds of Henry's brutal rage against the society that created and manufactured him. When seen, the effect of murder, as in real life, is devastating, witness the infamous 'home movie' scene, in which we see, in upfront, personal detail, Henry and Otis' video-recording of their murder of a husband, wife and son. Father gagged on the floor, Otis molesting the wife while Henry operates the camcorder, and the unexpected arrival of the couples' son, who Henry deals with by dropping the camera (a grotesquely skewed camera angle here), wrestling the boy to the floor and breaking his neck, an action Otis, ever the hero-worshipper, copies on the boy's mother. A few knife stabs to the man's stomach and it's all over, at least until Otis rewinds the video they brought home to run through it again in slo-mo. 'Video Nasties' for 'real', and the most realistic depiction of brutality since Wes Craven's **LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT** many moons ago.

The character of Henry is among the most complex, and paradoxically, the simplest, of all cinema villains, although this latter word is possibly a generalisation at best. This is no Norman Bates, despite the killing of his own mother, nor a flamboyant Leatherface creation, rather an ordinary looking and speaking, essentially dull individual, at odds with every human-being around him, incapable of showing or receiving love and, most disturbingly, able to inspire sympathy from the audience that succeeds in distracting them from some of his more heinous actions. The celebrated monologue where he tells Becky about his mother, her flaunting of her sexual clients in front of him and his father, how she used to make him watch, dressed up in little girl's clothes, can only be heard and viewed with shock sympathy by the audience (given these facts and more, how can we blame, or at least misunderstand, why he killed her?), and yet his immediate confusion of the modus operandi of his mother's death, lets us realise the sheer number of people he has killed over the years,

one blurring inexorably into the next, an endless configuration of violent death. There is no justification offered for all of this, only the cold, hard facts, and the film's total refusal to moralise on Henry's actions make this film far harder to take than almost any comparable film about serial killing. Beside this, even the great **SILENCE OF THE LAMBS** looks positively one-dimensional.

Throughout, Michael Rooker's performance is exemplary. Carving a career for himself over the past few years as a striking character actor (from the Costa-Gavras film **MUSIC BOX**, and the racist redneck in Alan Parker's **MISSISSIPPI BURNING**, to the killer in **SEA OF LOVE**), Rooker has yet to top this star-turn, and possibly, never will. Groundbreaking material like **HENRY** comes along

Beauty & The Beast Competition



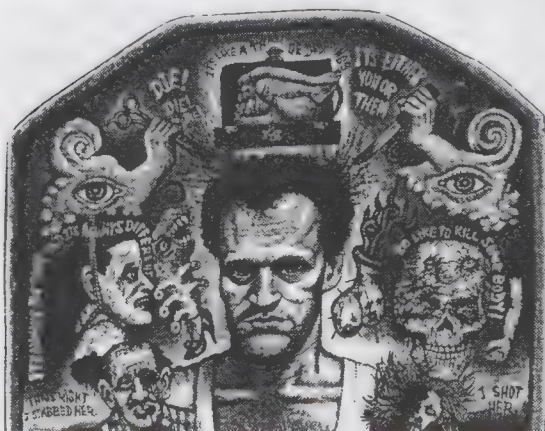
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"The pipes are calling..."



The disturbing promo artwork for **HENRY**

once in a blue moon, especially when hatched from such unlikely ingredients as a first-time director, unproven actors and a low budget, and yet is far more worthy than bigger, obvious successes. Given the film's belated release in U.K. cinemas in 1991, albeit slightly cut (but not enough to kill the rage), to its impending video release, it is likely that this dark masterpiece will gain in stature and recognition in the coming years. Enter, if you dare, the moral vacuum that is **HENRY** and feel and see what real death, pain and anguish is like, not the souped-up pyrotechnics of Hollywood and mainstream TV, where characters expire to well-timed monologues in well-pressed suits. The film's honesty can be unbearably depressing, but just because it speaks of society's ills with a grave, almost sombre acceptance, doesn't mean it shouldn't be heard...

Michael Wesley.

HIGHWAY TO HELL (1991)

Rank.
Directed by Ate de Jong.
94 mins.

Two young lovers, Charlie and Rachel, who are on their way to secretly marry in Vegas, take a back road and inadvertently wind up on the 'Highway to Hell'. Rachel gets abducted by the Hellcop, a disfigured demon in police uniform, as an offering for his master. The distraught Charlie seeks the help of a local garage-owner, who lost his own bride-to-be in the same way some forty years previously. The old man gives Charlie a special car and gun and he speeds off down that same highway, through a magical portal and into the outskirts of Hell itself. Meanwhile, poor Rachel, 'hand-cuffed' to the Hellcop, is being taken into increasingly bizarre territory en route to Hell City. Charlie gets into more trouble, loses his vehicle and then gets shot! Help is at hand though, in the form of

Beezle, the fixer, who makes things right again. Eventually the two are re-united but come face to face with the Devil himself, leaving their only path to freedom in the form of a challenge set by Satan... This is what we want, originality, and there's plenty of it on show here in Ate de Jong's surrealistic vision, and, coming after his farcical **DROP DEAD FRED**, it's like a breath of fresh air! Breathtaking photography and effective visuals permeate throughout: the Hellcop himself, a rune-scarred demon with 'fitted' shades, not to mention those literal 'handcuffs'; hoards of Andy Warhol clones who are paving the roads of Hell with various body parts taken from the increasing queues of wrong-doers; hundreds of VW cars(!?); a brilliantly devilish horny-female; a Harryhausen-inspired three-headed Devil-dog, etc., etc.; all gelling together with likeable characters, acted by Rob Lowe's brother Chad (**APPRENTICE TO MURDER**) as Charlie, Kristy (**SHOCKER**) Swanson as the virginal Rachel and Patrick Bergin, who can now be forgiven for his portrayal of **ROBIN HOOD**, as Beezle. It's all here, plenty of inspired action, weird and gruesome effects, a plethora of background jokes (that work) and memorable lines like "You look like 10lbs of shit in a 5lb bag!". Final verdict - a very likeable fantasy adventure that knows, very wisely, not to take itself too seriously and a film that should develop a deserved cult following.

Paul J. Brown.

HOMEBOODIES (1974)

Embassy Home Entertainment.
Directed by Larry Yust.
94 mins.

A rarely seen movie co-scripted and directed in 1974 by one Larry Yust, this is actually a sparklingly black horror-comedy detailing the nefarious activities of a

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*God made him simple.
Science made
him a God.*



The stunning Hellcop make-up from HIGHWAY TO HELL

group of old-timers refusing to be evicted from their condemned Cincinnati apartment block - a sort of psychotic COCOON, minus the aliens!

Led by the dominant Mattie (Paula Trueman), a motley group of OAP's including Miss Wilkins (Frances Fuller), Mattie's friend who hasn't left her room in years and converses with her father's ashes at dinner, and the caretaker Mr. Loomis and his wife (Ian Wolfe and Ruth McDevitt), their stand against the skyscrapers quickly turns to murder. Capitalising on an accident she witnessed at the building site where a young workman she'd just offered a prune to plummeted from a girder to his death, ("Better bring a sack!" blasts the coroner), Mattie and her companions are soon sabotaging construction on the basis that, whenever someone dies, work stops for a while. So workers are "fried like bacon" in the lifts or crushed by disconnected wrecking balls while parked in the port-a-loo, and all the while site manager Mr. Crawford (Douglas Fowley) remains blithely unaware of the real cause of it all. The uncaring woman bailiff is despatched with a carving knife by Miss Wilkins and Mattie, then conveyed by wheelchair across the city to be dumped over a railway bridge. Having already been relocated to an ugly, sterile looking monolithic structure across town, they all sneak back home and contrive to lure Mr Crawford into a trap; suspending him upside-down like a stranded bat, they try to reason with him but, when that fails, cart him to the top of his new building and, with poetic justice, encase him (and his Texan hat) in concrete. Mrs. Loomis considerably mopping his brow as the sludge creeps up past his nose! ("I hope they put enough lime in it?", her husband enquires...) However, some spark of sanity prevails. Mrs. Loomis wants it all to stop, but megalomaniac Mattie brains her with the father's ashes and kills another tenant attempting to give the game away. In a cracking climax, the grieving Mr. Loomis, Miss Wilkins ("You shouldn't have killed her with papa's ashes...") and the blind Mr. Blakely (Peter Brocco) turn on Mattie, leading to what can only be described as an arthritic, James Bond-ian style paddle boat chase down the river (the film's real coup-de-grace), where Mattie is cornered and savagely drowned. After dynamiting their home in a last act of defiance, the final three move to another condemned property; "We'll stay a while, maybe we can help?!", they tell the beleaguered tenants...

Made during an actual urban renewal programme in Cincinnati, Isidore Mankofsky's photography gloriously captures the decay and demolition around these characters, aided and abetted by director Yust's sharp eye for detail. It would be almost churlish to single out any one actor, so good is the ensemble, a lived-in atmosphere is evoked by the group, but Paula Trueman's turn as Mattie warrants special praise; taking initial audience sympathy (and there is genuine pathos in many scenes), moving her character into psychosis, and yet still commanding some sorrow at her death, is quite a feat, and she pulls it off superbly. The script, too, is often a joy to the ears: "Our contract doesn't cover getting cooked!", workers bleat to Crawford, who retorts that "I've got no labour problems, everybody's been paid off!" Hardly a major work of art, but quite a mystery why this hugely entertaining seventies gem remains so little known as it is well worth searching out, released briefly as it was on the Embassy video label many moons ago. One thing's for certain, ON GOLDEN POND would have been quite a different movie if it had followed this blueprint!

Michael Wesley.

THE HOUSE ON THE EDGE OF THE PARK (1981)

Video Film Merchandisers (VFM).

Directed by Ruggero Deodato (Roger Franklin). 91 mins.

Made in 1981, THE HOUSE ON THE EDGE OF THE PARK, known as LA CASA SPERDUTA NEL PARCO in its native Italy, is a giallo style thriller which received notoriety in Britain when it was banned as a result of the "video nasties" furor in 1984 (though the NFT has shown it since). Directed

by Ruggero Deodato, best known for the infamous CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST, the film stars David Hess taking his LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT persona one step further as a psychopathic thug who along with his retarded sidekick, played by John Morghen, gets invited to a party by a group of yuppies. On arrival, they soon realise that the bored socialites are just out for kicks, and promptly proceed to get the party started in their own special way.

Competently directed by Deodato with the emphasis on brutal realism, THE HOUSE ON THE EDGE OF THE PARK is a riveting film, decently acted and well photographed, but what holds the attention is the violence and Deodato's ability to confound the audiences expectations. Just when you think it can't get any nastier, it does. Brutal beatings, two disturbingly ambiguous seduction/rape scenes, assorted degradation and a horrific sequence in which a young woman is stripped, caressed and then slashed with a straight blade razor carry a cumulative power that is intensely shocking. The story is basically a rip-off of LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT and, as in that film, Hess gets his comeuppance by being shot to pieces by the yuppies, but not before one of the men tells him that the party had been an elaborate plot so that he could avenge the rape and murder of his sister (we saw this happen during the opening credits), but considering how much damage they let Hess inflict, especially to the young woman who accidentally stumbled in on the proceedings, you have to question his logic. Nasty stuff.

Daniel Stillings.

HUDSON HAWK (1991)

20.20 Vision.

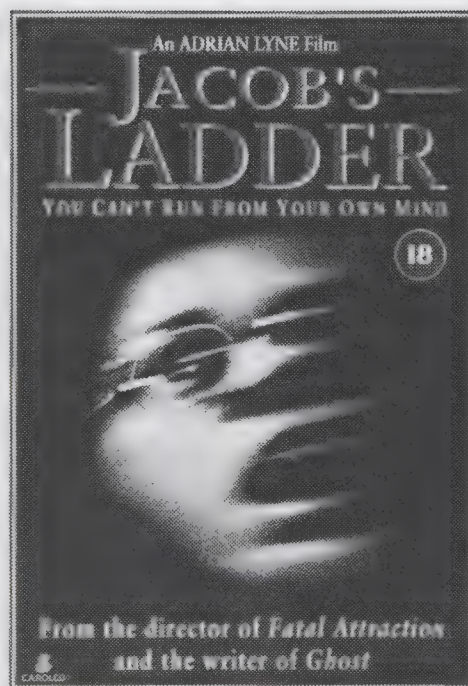
Directed by Michael Lehmann.

97 mins.

Re-teaming as it does HEATHERS director Lehmann and writer Daniel Waters (here co-scripting with Steven E. De Souza) and allying them to Joel Silver's dollars and superstar Bruce Willis (who also provided the original story idea), HUDSON HAWK was always destined, one way or another, for cult status; so the critical drubbing it received from USA critics (who never need much encouragement to have a go at Willis), plus its meagre box office take Stateside, just served to hasten the inevitable.

It's certainly easy to see why the critics hated it so much with Willis at his most irksomely smirksome (blissfully unaware of the fate in store for his pet project) in a film both ridiculously self-indulgent and ridiculously expensive (at least \$80m according to rumour), with a storyline that's just... ridiculous! Yet, in spite of all this, or perhaps because of it (knowing how the film was eventually received does add an unexpected new level of enjoyment to proceedings), and almost in spite of myself, I found I was enjoying it enormously.

The silly story (not unlike an overblown episode of MOONLIGHTING) has cat-burglar Willis, fresh out of jail and determined to go straight, coerced back into a life of crime by comic book villains Darwin and Minerva Mayflower - Richard E. Grant (what a bizarre c.v. he's amassing) and Sandra Bernhard (looking



Adrian Lyne's masterfully directed JACOB'S LADDER

even more like a SPITTING IMAGE puppet of herself than usual) - and so he finds himself, along with partner Danny Aiello, stealing a series of priceless Leonardo Da Vinci artifacts wanted by the dastardly duo for the crystals they contain which will enable them to power a Da Vinci designed machine for turning lead into gold. But with other interested parties keen to get in on the act, including nun-cum-spy Andie McDowell and C.I.A. man James Coburn (whose presence - deliberately? - underlines the general IN LIKE FLINT feel to the whole affair), things don't run according to plan...

HUDSON HAWK will undoubtedly disappoint (at least) as many as it entertains, and viewers who don't enjoy the slick opening with Willis and Aiello timing their break-in by singing along to 'Swinging on a Star' playing loudly on the soundtrack would do well to cut their losses and hit the eject button, but those prepared to stay along for the ride can rest assured that another scene of similar inspired lunacy is just around the corner; including delicious Andie McDowell "talking to the dolphins" and a wickedly funny scene involving a dog that made me laugh so much that I almost felt obliged to resign my RSPCA membership. Throw in some unexpected and surprisingly graphic (for a 15 certificate) violence (all the more shocking for the fact that it seems at odds with the general tone of the rest of the film) and you've got a film that is decidedly different to almost anything else around and one that should now find its (cult) audience via video. Just don't blame me if you don't enjoy it!

Mark Mutton.

JACOB'S LADDER (1991)

Guild Home Video.

Directed by Adrian Lyne.

108 mins.

Not at all what you'd expect from a film penned by GHOST writer Bruce Joel Rubin and directed by Adrian FATAL ATTRACTION Lyne - which could explain why its strong opening at the USA box office tailed off so quickly - JACOB'S LADDER is a profoundly disturbing film that burns into the mind and lingers long in the memory.

Mild-mannered mailman Jake Singer (Tim Robbins) thought the extent of his problems was a bad back and a fiery girlfriend until his increasingly vivid nightmares spill into his waking life and he finds himself pursued by the demons of his dreams and the ghosts of his past.

These dreams, accompanied by flashbacks to his time in Vietnam, increase in intensity so his life seems to teeter between past, present and future until he (and we) can no longer distinguish reality from nightmare. Confused and frightened, Jake determines to discover the facts of his predicament and the trail of conspiracy, deceit and murder he uncovers leads him to fear for not just his sanity but his very life... until the final twist pulls all the pieces of the puzzle together.

In lesser hands JACOB'S LADDER could easily have degenerated into just another rehash of familiar, overworked themes and ideas but thanks to Rubin's

ambitious (and, yes, perplexing) script, some terrific performances, and Lyne's superlative direction it's a gripping, frightening and ultimately moving piece of cinema.

Flavour of the Year Tim Robbins really delivers the goods with a measured, captivating performance that ensures you care about Jake's fate, and he is ably supported by excellent performances from Elizabeth Pena as his fleshy girlfriend Jezzie, the ever watchable Danny Aiello as his philosophical chiropractor and Matt Craven as the chemist with one of the keys to the mystery.

But it's Lyne's direction that really elevates the film to unexpected heights, for while it still has all the surface gloss we've come to expect from the ex-commercial director it also has a depth and drive that shows he has the talent to match the box office performance of his earlier films. One unnerving image follows another, from the unspeakable horrors of the Vietnam flashbacks (hardly virgin territory but these stand as some of the most shocking yet committed to film) to a trip into hell at a horror hospital; but most disconcerting of all is the scene at a party where, under strobing lights, Jake witnesses Jezzie seemingly molested and penetrated by a horrific demon - a heady brew of sex and horror, it plays like a scene from a Polanski film and is one I'm sure he'd be proud of.

Indeed, the film in general brings to mind the (genre) work of the diminutive Pole with the main protagonist kept constantly off balance, unsure of the motives of those around him and of who he can or can't trust, as well as in the way everyday objects and situations are imbued with an undercurrent of menace and mistrust - and likewise in Lyne's (outsider's) take on the life and people of the city (here New York) the film is set in.

JACOB'S LADDER is a film that demands - and rewards - concentration, thought and patience, and also one that demands to be seen. It won't appeal to all tastes but even those who don't appreciate it are unlikely to forget it in a hurry. Me, I loved it.

Mark Murtan.

LONE WOLF (1987)

S.G.E. Home Video.

Directed by John Callas.

94 mins.

Lamentable and predictably lame-brained US entry in the much maligned genre of Werewolf Cinema. I mean, any film that can make Spanish actor Paul Naschy's Waldemar Damirsky look like Oscar-rated material *must* be dull, right? ... Right! I've railed before in earlier reviews about the parious state of American Horror so I don't wish to repeat myself, but even the worst bit of Euro-crap that I've ever encountered pisses on this shoddy, shot on video turd...

The plot (Hah!) revolves, inevitably, around yet another bunch of whining, mewling and puking American teens, as they try unconvincingly to solve a rash of (mildly) gory murders in their dead-end hicksville town. Yep, it's 'spot the werewolf', folks! Early on in the tedious proceedings I realised who the culprit was; it takes the film's heroes considerably longer to suss the lycanthropic killer out, even with the help of a computer buff who devises a 'werewolf finding' program (i.e. despite the fact that no-one in the cast looks capable of being able to spell the word 'computer', let alone devise such a plan). In the interim the 'Werewolf' manages to munch his way through the losers in the cast. In my admittedly biased, opinion not enough of the airheads on show here get their just desserts. Acting, plotting, music (yet more crappy M.O.R. rock, wow!), and special effects are bottom of the barrel, and even a school-mistress getting half of her face graphically ripped off at the film's spurious 'climax' failed to revive me from the deathly torpor that **LONE WOLF** inspired... A loser on every level, back to the drawing board folks (better still... just forget it). Total shiti!

Gordon Welle.

LOBSTERMAN FROM MARS (1989)

Entertainment In Video.

Directed by Stanley Sheff.

78 mins.

Tony Curtis plays a character called Shelldrake, a successful movie mogul, who, according to his accountant, must make a flop in order to save himself from the hands of the taxman.

Enter young Steve Horowitz (Dean Jacobson), a seventeen-year-old ambitious film-maker, who takes his cheap and tacky production, 'Lobsterman From Mars', to Shelldrake in the hope of him backing it. They slip the film into a projector and sit back to watch it. The plot goes something like this: Mars is running out of air, so the King sends Lobsterman to Earth in the hope of capturing some of our atmosphere! A young couple, Mary (Deborah Foreman) and John (Anthony Hickox), find the Lobsterman's spaceship and get drawn into the adventure of saving his planet. They are assisted by Professor Plocostomos (Patrick Macnee) and together they formulate a plan...

A few good gags, the best of which involves a brilliantly over-acted private detective who keeps popping in and out of scenes at random, but on the whole, it's a mess with some talents going sadly to waste; having said that, **WAXWORK** and **HELLRAISER III** director Anthony Hickox should not, under any circumstances, attempt any further acting assignments!!! I get the feeling that **LOBSTERMAN** wants to desperately become a cult movie and even takes its basic premise from the very cultish **THE PRODUCERS**, but it has none of the wit and charm of that production. It simply tries hard to be funny and ends up coming across as a damp squid! Seventy-Eight minutes is simply too long.

Paul J. Brown.

MEMOIRS OF AN INVISIBLE MAN (1992)

Warner Home Video.

Directed by John Carpenter.

95 mins.

Successful stock analyst Nick Halloway (Chevy Chase) is left invisible after a freakish accident at a research laboratory.

What sounds like every boy's dream soon turns into a nightmare as our transparent friend finds himself being sought after by a ruthless and corrupt government agent (Sam Neill) who wants him to become an invisible assassin!

After successfully avoiding capture an improbable romance blooms with Alice Marlow (played by Darryl Hannah).

The two lovers find solace in a friend's beach house, but their secret is soon out and his pursuers home in...

A very different and touching story of love and friendship meticulously and carefully crafted by loyal genre director John Carpenter.

On paper the casting of Chevy Chase in a Carpenter picture seemed and looked positively disastrous, but I'm happy to report that Chase delivers a tour-de-force performance (not at all transparent!), delightfully mixing his comic skills with just the right dose of old-fashioned pathos. His delivery of lines like "I can't sleep, I can see through my eye-lids..." are moving to say the least. So all you genre purists who have been put off because of the casting should think again!

Darryl Hannah provides admirable support to her invisible lead and, as always, looks absolutely gorgeous.

Sam Neill's role takes him full-circle, getting right away from his good guy image in things like **DEAD CALM** and back into the realms of **THE FINAL CONFLICT** - his job is done well, but he fails to provide us with a truly memorable villain.

Helping to gel the performances together are the quite spectacular (and very) special-effects which take the art of on-screen invisibility to its limits - the shot of a piece of bubble-gum chewing itself and the scene in which Chase has facial make-up applied

are really quite magical.

Carpenter's assured direction offers many rewards for the viewer and the overall feel is somewhat similar to his breath-taking **STARMAN**. Although it failed at the cinema, it should do well on cassette, where it can be discovered and savoured. Some scenes pay, quite rightly, homage to its cinematic predecessors, but this wins a lot of honours in its own right! Carpenter deserves a break from some of the critical flack he's been showered with over the past few years, which, I for one, have never been able to comprehend as all of his films offer rewarding viewing. **MEMOIRS OF AN INVISIBLE MAN** should be seen, or not seen, as the case may be!

Paul J. Brown.

MIRAGE (1989)

New World Video.

Directed by Bill Cron.

85 mins.

A group of four friends plan a fun weekend in the desert and they arrange to meet up at a camp-site. All goes well and their partying begins but one of the girls has that "I'm sure we're being watched?" feeling, the others shrug it off in spite of two of them being followed by a mysterious black pick-up truck and a warning slapped onto their windscreen informing them that they are "all going to die".

A little time passes and the black truck reappears with the crazy driver getting down to business - in the middle of the night he chases one of the couples and then lobbs a grenade at their jeep. The girl gets away but her boyfriend finds himself up to his neck in the scorching desert sand with a primed grenade for company - boom!!! Meanwhile back at the camp-site one of the other girls has had her throat torn out and their jeep has also been wrecked. Another "good luck" note is found nearby.

With only two of them left alive, Tidy (Kevin McFarland) and Chris (Jennifer McAllister), they decide to try and get away and set off on foot, but as time passes it's not long before Chris is left all alone with only a roving maniac for company...

After an, at first, amusing then kind of corny opening when the film almost moves into a college co-ed romp, **MIRAGE** quickly develops into a tense (but not totally relentless) ritualistic slaughterthon, a sort of 'desert **DUEL**', that does pay back in a fair amount of red glory!

It offers some brilliantly photographed high-gloss visuals which help in giving the modest budget a polished look (the copy I saw did have poor sound quality though and may have been a faulty tape?). Nothing much happens in the acting stakes, although Jennifer McAllister does do all that is required of a part like this and is easy on the eye. B.G. Steers, who plays the psycho, is also worth a mention as he does create some tension. I also liked his line "I always wondered how long one of you Prom-Queen bitches would take?".

As I mentioned earlier, the film carries a fair amount of plasma but not in the usual stalk and slash vein - most of the effects shots are shown in retrospect of the gory event and in doing so they take you completely by surprise and are well executed (one scene in particular brought tears to my eyes!).

Entertaining and rewarding viewing for those who stick with it!

Paul J. Brown.

MUTRONICS (1991)

(aka **THE GUYVER**)

Medusa.

Directed by Screaming Mad George and Steve Wang.

84 mins.

A young martial arts student finds 'The Guyver' ("The most lethal weapon conceived, a one of a kind prototype"), which transforms him into an armoured superman/beast. Once in this guise our young hero possesses phenomenal strength and fighting skills, which is just as well because he needs all of this beefed-up power to keep 'The Guyver' out of the



MUTRONICS - THE MOVIE

hands/claws of a genetically altered race known as the Zoanoids...

See monsters beat the shit out of each other... see an ill-looking David (RE-ANIMATOR) Gale mutate... see Michael (THE HILLS HAVE EYES) Berryman slap himself around... see an ageing Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill himself) as a CIA agent who mutates in true THING style... see a monster that can rap... see mucho martial arts performed by monsters... see monster limb-lopping... see mutated meltdowns... see Jeffrey (RE-ANIMATOR) Combs as a crazy scientist... see a neat JAWS joke... see a neat cloning effect... see Scream Queen Linnea Quigley play a, well, Scream Queen(I)... and much more!!

Aimed squarely at the market created by the NINJA TURTLES, MUTRONICS kicks carapace in the make-up and action scenes, and elevates itself to the upper ranks of comic-book caper films with relative ease.

Co-directed by effects experts Screaming Mad (SOCIETY) George and Steve (PREDATOR 2) Wang it moves at a tremendous pace hardly letting you get a breather between the fights and the effects (which they also handled!). Producer Brian (SOCIETY) Yuzna, knew that these boys were destined for more than prosthetics and he should be proud as hell to have what will be a cult-sleeper on his hands.

Like I said, a non-stop fantasy that I enjoyed. I was also comforted by the fact that "No Zoanoids were injured during the making of this movie!"

Paul J. Brown.

NIGHT SHADOW (1990)

Colourbox Video.

Directed by Randolph Cohan.

92 mins.

The small community of Danford is terrorised by a string of murders and mutilations, the work of a hirsute and wild-eyed drifter on the edge of town who turns out to be a werewolf. Utterly awful straight-to-cassette garbage, the sort of title which clogs up the video pages of FANGORIA and which probably pisses-off their reviewer every bit as much as it did me. Judging from the credit 'based on a concept creature designed by Mark Crowe', the project would appear to have originated on the sketch-pad of a budding young make-up artist who, having created his less-than-spectacular variant on the wolfman theme, teamed up with a bunch of pals to, hey, put together their own movie. Dane Chan apparently fancies himself as something of a martial arts expert, hence the story grinds to a halt every half-hour so he can beat up a few stray bikers or cops; and the presence of Aldo Ray in an embarrassing cameo as, get this, a salesman specialising in piscine novelties such as the 'Squid Scraper', should be enough to convince you not to bother.

The attempt to suggest the werewolf's mythical history and possible past-life link with reporter Brenda Vance, via a few throwaway flashback visions and a meaningless dream sequence with a fanged Chan chewing on a bloody human hand, is a complete failure, and the incantations and portentous quotes contained in the lycanthrope's diary ("I am the Dane - and I have come for you") are likewise rendered

incomprehensible through the lack of any climatic explanation.

Just about the only point in the movie's favour is that it manages to avoid the normal pitfalls of the shape-shifting sub-genre, i.e., contriving to shoe-horn silver bullets and the like into the plot just so the damned beast can be blown away at the end. Nope, here we get Chan splattering ol' 'Wolffy all over the bonnet of a police vehicle before igniting the gas tank with a well-aimed pistol blast and setting fur-face ablaze. What a pity that it takes ninety agonizing minutes before we discover that these guys, unlike John Landis, at least know how to finish off a werewolf picture.

Darrell Buxton.

PEACEMAKER (1990)

Medusa.

Directed by Kevin S. Tenney.

87 mins.

An alien craft crash-lands off the American coast and moments later a superhuman man, Townsend (Lance Edwards), starts to deal out some serious shit to the cops after getting apprehended for trying to steal a police rifle, he gets shot to pieces - "I think we just killed Clark Kent!" - and is carted off to the morgue.

While on the slab his wounds miraculously heal and he's up and running again taking the female morgue technician, Dori (Hilary Shepard), with him as a hostage. As he makes his escape he gets attacked by yet another super sucker, Yates (Robert ALLIGATOR Forster), who is packing a mutha of a pistol!

It transpires that one of them is in fact a serial-killer from outer-space and the other is a cop, or 'peacemaker', and while on a chase they somehow got sucked into a black-hole and ended up travelling through space, re-emerging on Earth!

They both start hacking and blasting each other to bits but this is only a temporary glitch for them as they have the power to rejuvenate and it appears that the only way to kill them is by destroying the brain! Someone attempting to rectify the whole matter is local policeman, and friend of Dori, Robert LICENCE TO KILL Davi.

There is however a big problem - both aliens are claiming to be the 'peacemaker' and both have come up with convincing stories which leaves Dori in the difficult position of not knowing who to trust? Not breathtakingly original (but then again I'd rather have a new film than yet another sequel), a scene near the end has been lifted straight out of VIDEODROME, but it has its moments and is an improvement on director Kevin Tenney's WITCHBOARD.

Lots of stunts (although the jumping through doors and windows was overdone a little!) and passable gore effects which when mixed with the characters and the lively storyline make PEACEMAKER a

pleasing 87 minutes and should be required viewing for you TERMINATOR and DARK ANGEL buffs out there.

Paul J. Brown.

THE PEOPLE UNDER THE STAIRS (1991)

CIC Video.

Directed by Wes Craven.

98 mins.

Backed, or should that be burdened, by a strong recommendation from horror film snob Barry Norman, Wes Craven's THE PEOPLE UNDER THE STAIRS arrives as a sort of horror-comedy-social satire-social conscience-cum modern day fairy tale kind of movie (oh, and it's inspired by a true story!) - having proved himself a master of horror films the genre is obviously now too limiting for Craven's talents.

Encouraged to robbery by circumstances (the rent is due and his mother needs cash for a life-saving operation) and the adults around him (his sister's boyfriend and his crony) young "Fool" agrees to participate in a burglary on the home of the very same slum landlord who is the cause of most of his families troubles. The trio are able to gain entry into the house but leaving isn't so easy and Fool soon finds himself trapped in the house with the two unhelped owners and with the only source of help being their "daughter" Alice and the friendlier of those people under the stairs...

This is certainly a return to top form for Craven as he serves up a sharp allegorical tale of modern American mores and if he ultimately overreaches himself by dipping his finger into too many (apple) pies then it's better to fail this way than to simply fall short of the mark like so much other recent genre fare. Another problem, or more accurately an extension of the same one, is that you're never sure at what level the film is pitched, with scenes of repellent gore uneasily rubbing shoulders with social commentary and comic capers (with a scene where Fool contrives to electrocute the landlord's marauding dog descending into total farce) and consequently the film never really finds a comfortable niche. None of which detracts from the overall excitement and entertainment value of the film, with highlights including two delicious performances from TWIN PEAKS regulars Everett McGill (whooping it up as a trigger-happy, leather-clad looney) and Wendy Robie (further perfecting her wicked witch persona), and they are matched by confident, accomplished performances from the two young leads, Brandon Adams as Fool and Jemma Redgrave lookalike A.J. Langer as Alice. And with terrific set designs and some of the sharpest and funniest dialogue this side of a Spike Lee joint ("Your father is one sick mother, you know that....? Actually, your mother is one sick mother too.") THE PEOPLE UNDER THE STAIRS has many more good points than bad and stands as



Kevin S. Tenney's PEACEMAKER

one of the better genre offerings of the year.

Mark Murton.



A naff sleeve for a sick and twisted movie - Wes Craven's **THE PEOPLE UNDER THE STAIRS**

POPCORN (1990)

Trans Atlantic Entertainment.

Directed by Mark Herrier.
87 mins.

After doing good business in the USA **POPCORN** goes straight to video in the UK and considering the lame title and the fact that even the BBFC only thought it horrific enough for a 15 certificate it proves to be a surprisingly entertaining and enjoyable horror spoof.

While cleaning up an old, soon to be demolished, movie theatre where they are to stage a Horrorthon, complete with hoary old B-movies to be shown in their original "3-D Projectovision", "Aroma-Rama" and "Shock-O-Scope" (along with a few surprises of their own), the members of a college film society come across an old one-reeler entitled "Possessor". They run the film and it has a devastating effect on one of the group, Maggie, as the images on the screen mirror those of a recurring nightmare that has been giving her sleepless nights. Maggie faints and on her recovery their teacher tells the group the story of the film, how it was made by one Lanyard Gates who left the film unfinished so that he could act out the final scene, the sacrifice of his family, live on stage, and how he was thwarted in his efforts and presumed to have perished along with his film in the ensuing fire.

The group laugh it off and the preparations continue, but Maggie's nightmares continue too and allied to a series of mysterious phone calls serve to convince her that Gates is still alive and intent on revenge. The night of the Horrorthon arrives and it looks like being a great success until the stunts arranged by the group to scare their fellow students start to go wrong, leading to death and mayhem until the final showdown between Maggie, her boyfriend and the killer (including a few surprise revelations and a few not so surprising ones).

The chief criticism of **POPCORN** is that the B-movie clips (made especially for the film) showing at the Horrorthon are better than the main body of the film itself, obviously having been made with great care and skill and showing a genuine affection for such films, even if the performances are too knowing and

the direction, etc. too inventive for them to appear truly authentic.

One unintended B-movie touch that does let the film down is some, at times, woeful post-synching (possibly a fault in the video transfer?) but it shouldn't deter potential viewers as those B-movie recreations really are terrific and along with solid performances from the leads - Jill Schoelen as Maggie (still playing schoolgirls and still just one (more) great part from major stardom), Dee Wallace-Stone in another all-American "Mom" role, and Tony Roberts as the group's teacher, plus an energetic performance from Tom Villard as the Phantomesque killer and some excellent effects work **POPCORN** is a fun film just right for an undemanding evening's entertainment.

Mark Murton.

PRAYER OF THE ROLLERBOYS (1990)

First Independent.

Directed by Rick King.

91 mins.

Set in a future America where the streets are ruled by teenage gangs **PRAYER OF THE ROLLERBOYS** tells the tale of Griffin (Corey **THE LOST BOYS** Haim) and his baby bro, Miltie (Devin Clark), who were orphaned a year previously to this story. They come to the aid of someone in distress and just happen to save the life of a Rollerboy.

Rollerboys are the most powerful gang on the streets who storm through the city on their rollerbladed skates.

The leader of the Rollerboys is Gary Lee (Christopher **THE MANHATTAN**

PROJECT Collet) and he asks Griffin to become one of their number - they were childhood friends and Griffin is an accomplished skater. Griffin wants to avoid them but young Miltie is getting drawn into their evil ways.

The local police also want Griffin to join, as an informer, so they can uncover their "mist" making factory.

Eventually he decides to join and has to overcome a death-defying initiation test.

Miltie gets sucked in by it all and gets himself addicted to the "mist".

Griffin plays his part well but some of the other gang members begin to doubt his loyalty so they arrange a "special event" - a ritual near-beating-to-death of 'Speedbagger', the kid's kind of father figure...

Eventually Griffin gets offered the position in the

"kitchen", where the "mist" is manufactured and the police see this as their chance to bust up the multi-million dollar organisation. This just leaves Griffin alone to face a Rollerblade duel with the dangerous Gary Lee...

Exciting, innovative action and excellent stunts are combined with a good script making **ROLLERBOYS** a must see tape - forget the '15' rating, teeny-bopper title and off-putting casting as this is bleak and violent stuff!

Corey Haim finally gets real and makes a good lead in what can best be described as **A CLOCKWORK ORANGE** meets **THE WARRIORS** (the white suits and braces did look a little familiar as did some of the skating scenes). He is also more than ably supported by the rest of the young cast.

Someone get me a pair of those skates and, remember, "The day of the Rope is coming!"

Paul J. Brown.

PSYCHOCOP (1989)

RCA/Columbia.

Directed by Wallace Potts.

84 mins.

It doesn't take long for the 'plot' to get underway and, unfortunately, a predictable genre stalk n' slash evolves with a group of co-eds, out for a weekend in the country, getting tailed by a one-liner spouting sicko-officer of the law.

Within minutes of settling into the, strangely empty, luxurious house the caretaker misplaces his axe, only to find it again, embedded in the top of his head! (Good effect!)

As the teens inane dialogue and routine plot meander on some of the meatheads suspect that something is wrong when they can't find the caretaker and discover some weird crosses in the woods.

Then, slowly but surely, the death toll rings, one by one for our bunch of 'heroes' in true neatly-spaced cinematic intervals...

This low budget wannabe plodded the beat somewhere in between the releases of William Lustig's **MANIAC COP & MANIAC COP 2** and is a rather slow and tedious exercise in formula 'terror' not helped by having a genuine millstone around its scrawny neck, the bad guy! The producers seem to think that any big man with a deep voice can be cast as a psychopath - wrong! The would-be deviant portraying the killer-cop here (Bobby Ray Shaffer) would be hard pressed to deliver mail let alone convincing lines!

The odd trace of red-stuff here and there, but, sadly, it's all too predictable and brainless - save your dosh!

Paul J. Brown.



The Rollerboys are back in town - a film well worth a look!



The PSYCHOCOP has a stab at the stalk 'n' slash game

SCANNERS II : THE NEW ORDER (1990)

MGM/UA Home Video.
Directed by Christian Duguay.
100 mins.

This sequel begins with an explosive start set in a video-arcade where Drac ("I think we've found another of them"), an almost neanderthal looking 'scanner' (shame on you if you haven't seen the original), vents his pent up wrath on the arcade machines and gets himself abducted by a research team from the Morse Neurological Research Institute who want to use him as part of a special unit of scanners put together by Commander Forrester. The Institute has other 'scanners' but the only way they can control them is by making them dependent on hard drugs which in turn renders them useless. However, the doc thinks that Drac will be different. Enter David, a trainee vet, who also has the full scanning abilities - and we first witness his power when his girlfriend gets attacked by two jerks in a supermarket hold-up - David unleashes his force with the inevitable brain bursting results! Commander Forrester manages to see David's telepathic scenes of destruction as it was captured on the store security video-tape and they haul him in for experiments. They set up a test between David and Drac with David proving far stronger.

David's final test is to seek out a murderer who has been spiking milk with stricnine - he completes this task with relative ease.

Overjoyed that he has finally found a proper use for his talents he at last feels at ease.

Forrester has other plans though, and he uses Drac to kill the Chief of Police and then uses David to influence the Mayor into appointing him as the new Chief.

Once installed as the new Chief, Forrester talks of fighting crime with his 'new order'.

David is oblivious to Forrester's evil plans and on Drac's advice he scans the new Chief's mind - "It's better than a splatter movie" says Drac. David then finds out the truth, that Forrester plans on using the scanners to control society. He rebels and escapes. In an attempt to hide he goes back to his 'parents' place in the country where he discovers that he was in fact adopted and that his real father is Cameron Vale (the key player in the first film).

Drac and a cop arrive and shoot his step-family and on his death-bed his 'dad' informs David that he also has a sister, Julie, whom he sets off to find.

David goes to the Mayor to tell all but she is quickly assassinated by Forrester's men.

Forrester now plans on running for office.

At last David is reunited with his sister and together they set about stopping Forrester before it is too late...

Well, I simply must confess that **SCANNERS II** is a

very pleasant re-visit into the world of cerebral horror and is a worthy sequel to Cronenberg's original head-splitter.

David PIN Hewlitt is exciting and interesting to watch as the New Order's key player and proves to be more convincing than Stephen Lack from the first film. However, Raoul Trujillo, as Drac, has a tough act to follow, that of Michael Ironside, but to give him his dues he does make a significant bad guy.

Lots of neat effects, involving the obligatory exploding heads, withered bodies and bullet hits, etc. and they are just as good as Dick Smith's, in fact they may be better!

Hail the New Order, a sequel to be stood up and counted!

Paul J. Brown.



SCANNERS III : THE TAKEOVER (1991) (aka. SCANNER FORCE)

First Independent.
Directed by Christian Duguay.
97 mins.

SCANNERS III (as I prefer to call it - I can't think why First Independent felt the need to mess around with the title?) takes the premise that the children of the surviving 'scanners' also carry the scanning gene but any help offered them with drugs such as EPH-1 and EPH-2 have failed to cure their pain.

The story begins with a splat as we are introduced to a scanning brother and sister, Alex and Helena Monet, who are guests at a party. As a 'party trick' Alex scans his best friend, but his concentration is broken by a friendly pat on the back and his chum is sent hurtling to his death from a high-rise apartment window.

As a result of the unfortunate accident Alex flees in an attempt to try and "master his powers" and finds sanctuary in a Thai monastery.

Two years later and Helena is plagued by violent headaches and tries to hide away her power from the world, but when caught up in a mugging she lets loose her mental vengeance. She is disturbed by the incident and just wants to live a 'normal' life.

Then her adoptive scientist father tells her about a prototype wonder drug, EPH-3 - at first she shuns the idea of more drugs, but as her pain continues (with vivid nightmares of her childhood with the sadistic Dr. Bauman) she steals some EPH-3 samples and finds that the 'cure' is almost instant! However, the drug has very drastic side-effects and as well as harnessing her powers alters her persona to that of pure evil, which is first glimpsed when she scans a helpless pigeon with typical splattery results! As Helena's 'skills' increase she heads off for the Bauman Institute and creates sheer hell when she scans her former torturer with finger-popping and head-bursting (natch!) results (and as a particularly gruesome touch, takes a polaroid close-up of the latter effect!).

With the Doctor out of the way she gives the 'cure' to all his other interned scanner 'patients' and enlists their help in tracking down her brother Alex, in the hope of getting him out of the way so that she alone can inherit their father's business, Monet Pharmaceuticals.

Meanwhile, Alex, with the assistance of his monk master, is thinking about leaving the monastery and using his 'gift' to benefit mankind.

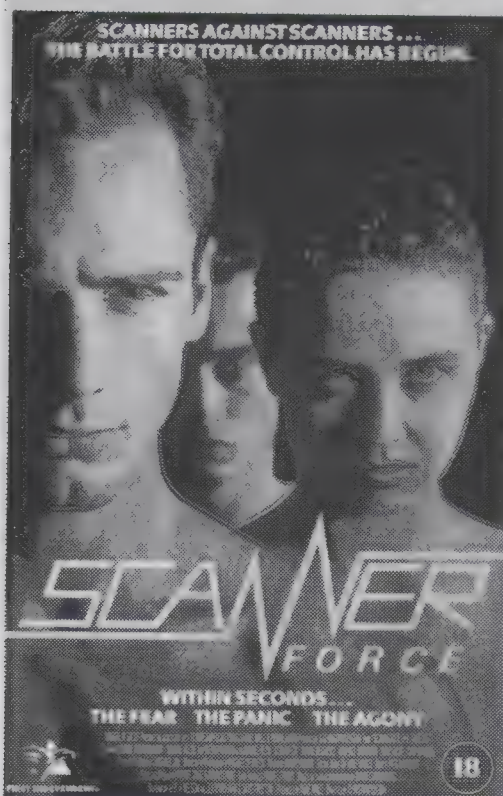
The power-crazed Helena then turns her evil attention on her father and drowns him in his own jacuzzi.

After the 'accident' Alex is contacted by his father's solicitor and is forced to take action against his sister as she undertakes an elaborate plan of mass domination via the TV airwaves with a technique that she has developed...

Almost as good as the first sequel with director Christian Duguay again providing us with healthy doses of excitement, good effects and decent photography - the script is not too bad, but had room for improvement.

Liliana Komorowska tries very hard as the evil Helena and almost pulls it off in terms of portraying a vile and sexy bitch. However, her awful Polish accent tends to grate and become almost incoherent at times and she does over do the facial expressions

SCANNER FORCE COMPETITION



The second sequel to David Cronenberg's **SCANNERS**, entitled **SCANNERFORCE**, is out on video and this is your chance to win a VHS copy for yourself.

We have 2 vids to give away thanks to First Independent, just answer this easy question:

WHAT WAS THE DRUG CALLED THAT CREATED THE 'SCANNERS'?

Send your answer along to the editorial address, marking your envelope "SCANNERS III COMP", and don't forget to include your own details!

The first two correct entries drawn from our hat after 31st May 1993 will win.

5 seconds: They invade your mind.

10 seconds: The pain begins.

15 seconds: You scream for mercy.

a lot! Steve Parrish as her on-screen brother also grimaces quite frequently but he is a bit more accomplished in terms of acting ability and helps to carry the scenario a lot more convincingly.

It's interesting to note that as the scanner-series continues we are introduced to new lore and techniques, much in the way that Hammer did in the sixties with their Dracula and Frankenstein stories: we are shown such delights as the first nude scan; a disco-dance scan; scanning via video (very Cronenbergian that one!); a scanned finger; and an underwater pressurised scan! There is also a nice joke involving a severed arm! All the make-up effects are worthy and a credit to fx man Mike Madd. All in all, this third outing is a palatable addition to the series, which in these days of turkey-sequels is quite an achievement in itself.

My advice is to hire out all three tapes and have yourself an evening's mind-blowing entertainment.

Paul J. Brown.

SEIZURE (1974) (aka. QUEEN OF EVIL)

Astra Video/RCA/Warner Home Video/Go Video.

Directed by Oliver Stone.

94 mins.

It may come as a surprise to some, but there was life before **PLATOON** - witness Oliver Stone's forgotten 1974 directorial debut, **SEIZURE**, a film **CINEFANTASTIQUE** magazine wisely listed as one of the top genre films of the seventies.

This alarming, Faustian nightmare begins with our introduction to Edmund Blackstone (**DARK SHADOWS**' Jonathan Frid), horror writer extraordinaire, his wife Nicole (Christina Pickles) and their son Jason as they prepare their luxurious country home in Joliet for some weekend guests. Suffering from oppressive recurring nightmares and a weak heart, the arrival, among others, of Charlie (Joe Sirola), an obnoxious flaunter of wealth, and his wife Mikki (Mary Woronov), as well as old friend Serge (Roger de Koven) and his partner Eunice (Anne Meachum) does little to lighten Edmund's mood. We hear a radio report of asylum escapees in the area as Edmund sits sketching, characters drawn from his dreams - a dwarf, an executioner and a Queen of Evil.

Events escalate - Jason asks his father to look for the family dog Aziz, and he finds it hung from a tree in the woods; we glimpse the dwarf by the lake, while Nicole dreams of the Queen abducting Jason. A dinner party is disrupted, first by Charlie's attempts at superiority by virtue of his wealth, followed by the dwarf staring at Edmund through the window. The home-help, Betty, is chased and killed by the black executioner in the forest, and nightmare finally crashes into reality as these three figures from Edmund's dark unconscious materialise and lay siege to the house, promising only "darkness, damnation and a meaningless death" as reward for their gatecrashing.

The dwarf, Spider (Herve Villechaize), the executioner (Henry Baker) and the Queen of Evil (Martine Beswick) force their remaining victims to race five times around the house - the loser will die. After suffering a seizure, Charlie finishes last, and in a grotesquely amusing scene tries to buy his life with plastic money before having his head crushed! Mikki's attempted escape is thwarted, no-one is to leave the

fun and games. "You are the Faust who has brought them into being, my friend", Serge tells Edmund in his study. Edmund is forced to kill Mikki in a duel, and then granted a two-hour respite with Nicole by the Queen - "Very few men, or women, have ever refused me in the course of centuries", she petulantly tells him.

Come the dawn, Nicole's lipstick smeared "I LOVED YOU" on the bathroom mirror and a blood-stained razor-blade signal her suicide, and the final survivor, Edmund, reluctantly agrees to relinquish his son Jason to the Queen's dark embrace in return for his own life. However, Nicole's spirit intervenes through motherly love from beyond the veil, and Edmund is finally chased and throttled by Spider in the woods, at which point he awakes. Dream over, or just beginning?

The bathroom mirror still screams its message, and the Queen arises from Edmund's bed like a malevolent full-stop to his life. In the final scene, Jason runs to wake his father - for the weekend has really just begun - to find him cold and ashen-faced, having died of fright.

Extremely well photographed by Roger Racine, sharply edited, and with an excellent script (best line is Spider's taunting "I am old and ugly, but remember my race was born inside your belly", a true externalisation of inner demons!), this sorely neglected first feature showed Oliver Stone to be a striking and perceptive handler of genre material, in the days before he committed his remaining career to chronicling sixties America! The performances he obtained are of mood, paranoia and an undermining of reality. Noteworthy are Villechaize's chilling Spider, the voluptuous Beswick's cold Queen, and some great comic interplay between Sirola's Charlie and long suffering wife Mary Woronov. However, this film is Edmund's subconscious journey-into-death, and Jonathan Frid's anguished performance drives the action. It may all only be a dream (after all, one of the oldest cliches in the book...), but the seductively stylised filming, the often genuine sense of irrationality and fear conjured by it, are what make the film's seeming abandonment to the dustbin of time all the more upsetting. Seek this one out on the old Astra video label if you can!

Michael Wesley.

SHAKMA (1990)

20.20 Vision.

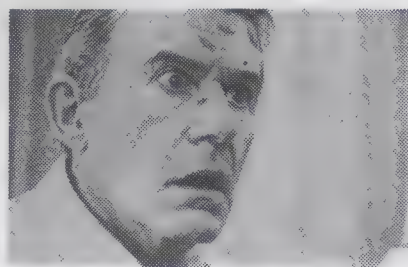
Directed by Hugh Parks.

101 mins.

A group of medical students with a penchant for real-life role-playing go about their surgical experiments on lab animals and make plans for tonight's game. They are using the research facility as a makeshift playing area and the centre's Professor acts as their computer-aided gamesmaster.

All goes well apart from the fact that an earlier experiment on a baboon ("Shakma") seems to have gone terribly wrong and the poor creature becomes overdosed with adrenalin, which causes him to run amok throughout the sealed building. Forget the role-playing as Shakma has decided to play a game of his own and he's showing the medical students that animals have rights, the right to get even...

The mad monkey movie is not dead and **SHAKMA** tries desperately hard to cut in on the path laid by George Romero with his triumphant **MONKEY**



Reliable genre regular Roddy McDowell in **SHAKMA**

SHINES. However, **SHAKMA** can't hold a candle to that particular primate and should not be judged in the same class. If judged on its own merits then it is a competently made production, with a reasonable cast (including Roddy McDowell, Christopher Atkins and Amanda Wyss) and does instil an air of menace and tension in the build-up. This is helped by the performance of 'Typhoon' the baboon who does a remarkable job of looking mean, moody and mightily pissed-off (and even does a better job at getting to grips with Christopher Atkins than Brooke Shields did in **THE BLUE LAGOON**!).

Unfortunately the film's colour is somewhat dull and washed out and most of the gore shots occur off-screen or in poor light, meaning that bloodhounds will be left still feeling thirsty.

Sadly, **SHAKMA** turns out to be too routine and tame for a nineties audience which at 101 minutes is way too long to hold interest and fails to stop your finger from pressing the fast forward button.

Paul J. Brown.

TALES FROM THE CRYPT VOL. II (1992)

Warner Home Video.

84 mins.

Three more ghoulish tales from the hit US TV series that, at the time of writing, still hasn't aired in the UK! Once again, each story is introduced by the 'cute' animated Crypt Keeper who looks great but still delivers his awful Forry-esque puns. First up is... 'LOVER COME HACK TO ME' - Directed by Tom Holland.

Charles and Peggy, a newly wed couple (played by Amanda FREEJACK Plummer and Stephen Shellen), wind up at a secluded mansion when their car breaks down in the middle of a storm. The marriage is a bit of a farce anyway as Charles just wants her for her money, but their evening still manages to develop into quite a lustful night. However, as they writhe beneath the sheets, the clock face in the bedroom shatters and they are disturbed by another honeymooning couple - the ghosts of Peggy's parents!

It transpires that Peggy's mother hacked her husband to death on their wedding night and that Peggy has similar plans for Charles...

This is really a bit naff for an opener and is only enlivened by a healthy splattering of blood that surprised me for American TV. Not a great start so on with the second story...

'COLLECTION COMPLETED' - Directed by Mary Lambert.

Moaning old Jonas retires from his job as a travelling salesman and finally gets to spend time at home with his wife and her menagerie of pets. But what should be a time of peace and relaxation turns into a nightmare for Jonas because his wife, Anita, has spent too long on her own with her animals and she ends up treating him like a pet!

Poor old Jonas can only take so much and decides to take up a hobby of his own, taxidermy...

A funny and, at the same time, quite grotesque segment, with delightful studio-bound exteriors, a very dark sense of humour (very true to the EC comics) and top-notch acting from the superb M. Emmet BLOOD SIMPLE Walsh and Audra Lindley as the retired couple. Of course, director Mary Lambert has been down this path before with **PET SEMATARY** and puts her skill and knowledge to very effective use. Easily the best of the bunch. What's next?...

'ONLY SIN DEEP' - Directed by Howard Deutch. Hooker and all-round bad girl Sylvia Vane trades in her 'beauty' by giving a face cast to a crazed pawnshop owner in return for \$10,000 and the life she'd always dreamed of. But, just like the man said, after four months are up her beauty will be all his. Needless to say, the vain Miss Vane forgets about the date and suddenly starts to age at an alarming rate...

BACK TO THE FUTURE's Lea Thompson gets mean 'n' mad as Sylvia and sports some effective Kevin Yagher make-up, but, like the first segment, this is not at all memorable.

This second volume of **TALES...** is not a patch on the first, which is a great shame as I'm sure that Warner could have pulled together a couple of quality episodes to live alongside the excellent 'COLLECTION COMPLETED' which as I've already stated is the only highlight of this anthology. (Incidentally, the date of the tape is 1992 but the actual episodes are from 1989).

Paul J. Brown.

TALES FROM THE DARKSIDE: THE MOVIE (1990)

Columbia Tristar Home Video.

Directed by John Harrison.

90 mins.

We had to wait a long time for the release of this anthology pic, so was it worth waiting for? I'll let you know at the end of this review.

Three tales are featured, as told by a small boy in the intro and linking scenes who is actually stalling for time as he is about to become the main course in a yuppie housewife's (played by Debbie - no, make that Deborah! - Harry) dinner party!

Tale one stars Christian Slater, as a college student, in a story entitled 'LOT 249' which concerns the resurrection of an ancient Mummy and is contained within a basic revenge plot - a weak-looking Mummy and an equally weak story make this segment the turkey of the bunch.

The second tale is suitably titled 'CAT FROM HELL': a desperate and infirm millionaire (William Hickey) hires a professional assassin (David Johansen) to eliminate a cat from his house. The cat has already killed his relatives and the old man believes that he will be next for the chop. Like the Mummy from the first part, this one plods a little, but, happily, it liven's up mid-way through when the tension mounts and the blood begins to flow - check out a terrific effect when the cat decides to start burrowing into a man's mouth!!

The final segment, 'LOVER'S VOW', is, undoubtedly, the best and concerns James Remar as a down and out artist who witnesses an extremely graphic murder by a hideous demon. In order to save his own life he makes a pact with the creature and vows never to speak of what he saw. Shortly after this event he meets sexy Rae Dawn Chong and falls in love. All is perfect for ten wonderful years... Like I said, they saved the cream of the crop until the end and I'm very glad they did! Michael BEETLJUICE McDowell's quite superb script for this part (he also wrote the screenplay for 'LOT 249', which was based on a Sir Arthur Conan Doyle story, while 'CAT FROM HELL' was scripted by George A. Romero from a Stephen King tale) is absolutely spot on as are the lavish effects (Dick Smith is credited as make-up consultant, as he was with the TV series) and the exciting pacing - 'LOVER'S VOW' is a perfect example of what an anthology tale should look like!

So, all in all, after an initial hiccup, **DARKSIDE** hops up to provide an enjoyable evening's entertainment, on a purely visceral level of course, and, as such, I'll have to say "yes", it was worth waiting for.

Paul J. Brown.

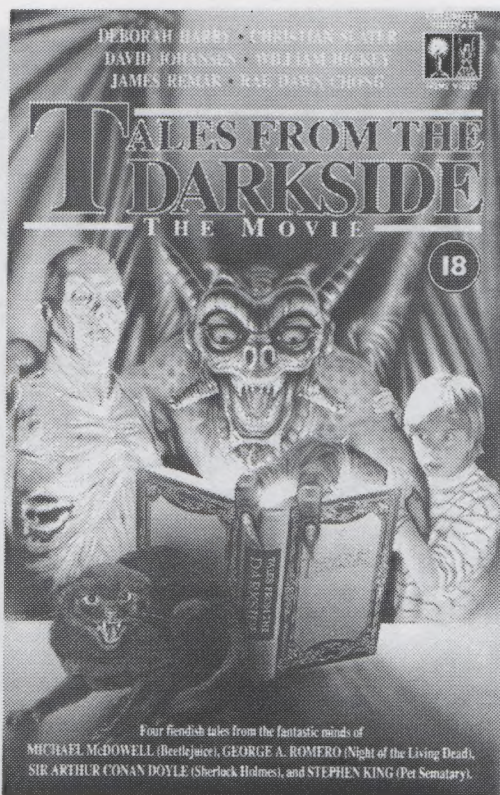
TURKEY SHOOT (1981) (aka. ESCAPE 2000)

Guild Home Video.

Directed by Brian Trenchard-Smith.

84 mins.

The Hemdale Film Corporation set up by David Hemmings and John Daly has done more than its fair share for independent film making over the years giving us such films as **POWWOW HIGHWAY**, **VAMPIRE'S KISS** and the brilliant **MIRACLE MILE**. **TURKEY SHOOT**, a vague remake of **PUNISHMENT PARK**, was one of the first films that they financed. Shot in Australia, it stars Steve Railsback and Olivia Hussey as two people who are arrested for



TALES FROM THE DARKSIDE: the video sleeve

supposedly political crimes in a futuristic totalitarian society. They are sent to a brutal correction centre for re-education where they end up being used as human prey in the warden's sadistic bloodsports. The incentive for taking part is that if they survive for a certain length of time they will be set free.

Eschewing the glossy art film approach most new Australian films adopt, **TURKEY SHOOT** is a gore-drenched exploitation movie following the lead of George Miller's 1979 film **MAD MAX** and turns out to be one of the most enjoyable slices of schlock entertainment in a long while. Even though the cast are universally average, Brian Trenchard-Smith, responsible for such films as **THE MAN FROM HONG KONG** and **DEAD END DRIVE-IN** directs at such a break-neck pace that you can't fail to get caught up in the proceedings. Despite being cut in Britain by six minutes, **TURKEY SHOOT** remains a violent film, and if you're not too squeamish and like over the top violent nonsense, this film is well worth seeing.

Daniel Stillings.

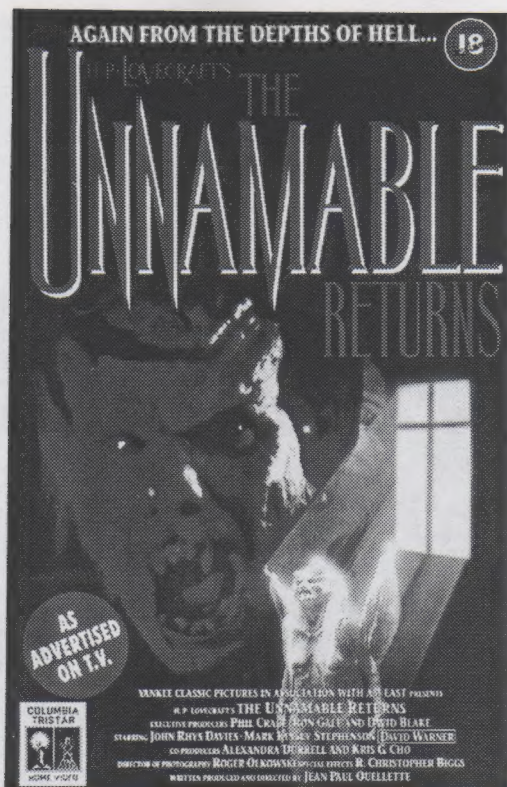
TWIN PEAKS - FIRE WALK WITH ME (1992)

Guild.

Directed by David Lynch.

135 mins.

Despite dying at the USA box office and being critically lambasted right from its first screening at Cannes in May 1992, **TWIN PEAKS** devotees were always going to want to decide for themselves about Lynch's prequel to his triumphant cult TV series, and as one of the show's most ardent admirers I have to say I found it... a disappointment. (And non-Lynch (and even non-PEAKS fans, to whom no concessions are made) are likely to hate every minute of it!) Doubts set in right from the start of the extended prologue with agents Chet Desmond (crooner Chris Isaak) and Sam Stanley (Kiefer Sutherland) being introduced at an airfield by FBI chief Gordon Cole (Lynch himself) where they encounter a strange woman in red (who brings to mind **ERASERHEAD**'s 'Lady in the Radiator' - the first of several pale echoes of Lynch's surreal masterpiece) and from here it's on to Harry Dean Stanton's Fat Trout Trailer Park to investigate the murder of Theresa Banks. But as good as these new additions to the **TWIN**



THE UNNAMABLE RETURNS and I bet you didn't even know it had been away?

PEAKS clan are, and Isaak is very good, fans will still find themselves wishing "Coop" and Albert had been assigned to the case instead (although Kyle MacLachlan wasn't available to take a leading role in the film he does still make a few appearances in scenes at FBI headquarters, along with Albert (Miguel Ferrer) (and a pointless but brief cameo from David Bowie), as well several obligatory dream sequences) - while the best scene of the prologue is basically just a rerun of the scene in the **TWIN PEAKS** TVM where a small square of paper with a single letter on it is found under one of the victim's finger nails.

After about 30 of the film's 135 minutes (it's both too long and too slow) we finally arrive in the familiar territory of Twin Peaks, but again fans will be disappointed, not only by the extensive list of absentees - everybody from the Hurleys and the Hornes (and Twin Peaks without Audrey is like cherry pie without the cherries) through to everyone at the saw mill (even Lynch regular Jack Nance is absent), and considering what a den of vice Twin Peaks is subsequently shown to be any form of law enforcement is conspicuous by its absence (and no scenes at the police station means no Lucy, leaving just a silly scene in the prologue with a secretary and cop giggling at a private joke left to serve as a pale imitation of the antics of Lucy and Andy); while many of those who do return are restricted to just the odd scene or line of dialogue - but, worse, also by the lack of characteristic offbeat humour and that unique, indefinable ambience that is **TWIN PEAKS**. This was presumably a deliberate ploy by Lynch but it's a mistake all the same, and there's not even anything to take its place; the greater freedom afforded by an 18 cinema certificate may allow for more explicit sex, language and violence but there's no real attempt to open things out (in any sense - even Lynch's excellent use of widescreen as seen in films like **BLUE VELVET** is sadly lacking here).

Ironically, one of the few characters from the series who does have a major role, Donna, is here played by a different actress with Moira Kelly taking over from Lara Flynn Boyle who was committed elsewhere (or objected to Lynch's portrayal of women - depending on your source. Or perhaps she just didn't fancy the nudity called for?), further distancing fans.

So it's left to Sheryl Lee's Laura to carry the film and she (ryl) rises to the challenge admirably, baring body and soul as she runs the full gamut of emotions

in chronicling Laura's descent from Homecoming Queen to fallen angel ripe for redemption (pay attention during those dream/fantasy sequences!); but the character herself just isn't sufficiently interesting to sustain it. Always a cliché, we know her story so well by now that there aren't any surprises left, leaving her to simply play out events until her inevitable death - so in a scene such as the one where Laura learns the true identity of "Bob" and is rightly devastated, we, fully aware of this from the start, are left merely as impassive observers, unaffected and unmoved.

However, the film is not without its good points, not the least of which is another magnificent score from Angelo Badaleamenti, plus some of those dream sequences which will bear closer examination upon the film's video release (though pretension is still no substitute for inspiration), Sheryl Lee's performance of course, and the scenes depicting Laura's final moments which are presented in their full unexpurgated brutality and are consequently genuinely harrowing and difficult to watch (and will no doubt further the case for those who accuse Lynch of misogyny). But it's not nearly enough to banish the doubts and if the **TWIN PEAKS** TV pilot had us all asking Who Killed Laura Palmer? the only question posed by **TWIN PEAKS - FIRE WALK WITH ME** is Has Lynch Lost His Magic Touch...?

Mark Murton.

(Just!)

THE UNNAMABLE RETURNS (1992)

Columbia Tristar Home Video.
Directed by Jean Paul Ouellette.
92 mins.

A surprise sequel if ever I saw one! The tale begins with the discovery of four mutilated corpses at an old cemetery on the outskirts of Arkham.

Judging by the state of the bodies it's quite evident that this is no ordinary murder case which is something that Miskatonic University's resident occult expert, Randolph Carter (Mark **THE UNNAMABLE** Kinsey Stephenson), knows all about and he has in his possession the key to it all - the fabled book, *The Necronomicon*.

Working apart from the police, Carter begins his own investigations into the Lovecraftian terror-tale.

Unable to get any help from the University's Principal (genre regular David Warner) Carter seeks the assistance of his friend Howard, the sole survivor from the killings, and Professor Harley Warren (John **WAXWORK** Rhys Davies).

Beneath the ancient graveyard they discover a labyrinth of twisting tunnels and passages. It is here that they also find the cloven-footed female demon Alyda (from the first film) and, with the help from the old book, they break the girl free from possession.

However, in saving the beautiful (and naked) girl they have unleashed a highly dangerous and quite frenzied creature who, separated from her human host, seeks to rejoin Alyda's form in order to exist. The 'unnamable' creature of the title begins a search for her and in doing so leaves a bloody trail in its wake... Like I said, this follow-up was a real surprise to me, but, having said that, the 1988 original did have one or two decent moments, most notably the depiction of the creature, played by a real-life mime-artist who gave the monster an other-worldly quality in its movements.

THE UNNAMABLE RETURNS

has much higher production values than the first and manages to unfold the story quite well, if a little slowly in places, and the above-average cast for this type of film work hard. The pivotal role of Randolph Carter (the film is actually based on Lovecraft's 'The Statement of Randolph Carter') is reprised by Mark Kinsey Stephenson who should be commended for his Jeffrey Combs/Peter Cushing-type dedicated performance - he would make a very convincing Sherlock Holmes, actually.

The creature fx are very good and serve the proceedings well, but, unfortunately, the strange movements that I mentioned earlier have not been retained which is a major blow. The other effects are used sparingly as director Ouellette (who also directed the original) has opted for more of a suspense slant rather than an all-out gore fest.

On a purely sexist level I enjoyed the seemingly endless shots of the naked girl (Maria Ford) even if her very long almost Godiva-ish hair was a little too discreet at times!

THE UNNAMABLE RETURNS remains an okay sequel but it lacks the pace and is way too long to hold the attention of today's horror fans.

Trivia note: The sound man should have his butt kicked for some of the gunshot blasts. If you decide to watch it after reading this you'll hear what I mean!

Paul J. Brown.

UPWORLD (1990)

Vestron.
Directed by Stan Winston.
88 mins.

After starting out as if it won't develop past a cheap **ET** clone, **UPWORLD** quickly unfolds as a rather enjoyable adventure with much in the way of humour, likeable characters and inventive action.

The plot revolves around Casey, a boyish detective, and his friendship with a Gnome called Gnorm (both pronounced with the 'G'!).

Casey (played by **WEIRD SCIENCE** actor Anthony Michael Hall) is working on a drugs/diamonds case and encounters the cute looking Gnome when he finds that he is the only witness to a murder. What's he doing here, I hear you ask? Well, Gnorm, whose kind live deep within the Earth's crust, has come to the 'Upworld' in order to expose a magical stone, a 'Lumin', to the sunlight which in turn will prevent his world from a fate of eternal darkness.

It's only when Casey loses the Lumin that Gnorm agrees to stay and help with the case.

In spite of some improbable casting with the witty Hall as a cop, I can guarantee that most viewers will warm to the exploits of this mis-matched duo with a difference. It's just the kind of move that this tried and tested (to the limit!) buddy-buddy genre (badly!) needed.

Director Stan Winston has come on in leaps and bounds and he shows us a lot of competence and originality (the story was hatched by **THE KISS** director Pen Densham) and once again, as with the

chilling **PUMPKINHEAD**, he impressed the hell out of me. The creature effects (Winston again!) are expertly handled, mixing some effective animatronics with some charming boy-in-a-suit realisations which help to carry the film in the believability stakes - yes, I was won over by the little fella and I'm sure that I won't be the only one!

Final verdict: a very pleasant surprise that makes for rewarding viewing for a whole family of fantasy followers! (Did you notice that I managed to write this without mentioning any gnome/elf jokes!?)

Paul J. Brown.



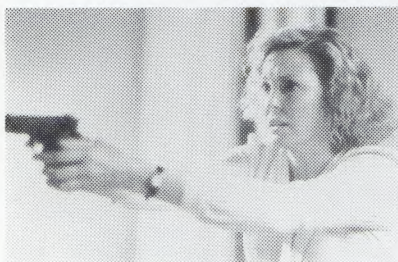
A Gnome called Gnorm - **UPWORLD**

WHISPERS (1989)

20.20 Vision.
Directed by Douglas Jackson.
89 mins.

Hilary Thomas (Victoria **FLOWERS IN THE ATTIC** Tennant) gets terrorised by a sicko called Bruno Clavell, but the attacker survives a shooting and makes off into the night.

She calls the cops and two detectives arrive, one a hard-bitten woman-hater and a sympathetic one (Chris **FRIGHT NIGHT** Sarandon) - the police find



Victoria Tennant in **WHISPERS**

that Clavell has been at home all evening, 90 miles away! Hilary had met Clavell only a month earlier through her work and can positively identify him.

The locks are changed that night but this doesn't stop Clavell from returning and attacking once more, but knife-at-the-ready Hilary stabs him in the guts and he staggers away.

The police arrive again and bring with them the news that Clavell has been taken into the city morgue DOA where Hilary has to identify him.

It seems that Clavell was a very rich man, owning a vast estate and a private funeral is held on his grounds.

Sarandon's partner is unexpectedly gunned down and killed - he takes solace in the arms of Hilary, but while out for some fast food misses the return from the grave of Clavell spouting all sorts of shit about garlic and stakes, etc. Once again Hilary escapes. Sarandon then divulges that they found a cache of vampiric materials in the back of Clavell's van.

Determined to get to the bottom of this bizarre mystery Sarandon sets off for the Clavell estate in search of clues. Meanwhile, sightings of Clavell are reported in several places...

Some truly great characterisations from not only the main players but from the people with small parts (forgive the expression!); springing immediately to mind is a truly excellent ex-madame, an occult bookseller, a necrophiliac funeral home owner and the partner cop. Victoria Tennant, at last, gives a performance that's good enough to make you forget about her monotonous accent (sorry, Mr. Martin!). Chris Sarandon again proves a good bet with his usual solid acting style and fails to put a foot wrong. The weakest part in the acting chain is that of the attacker, played by Jean LeClerc, who although weird enough can't quite carry the part off.

A really efficient little Dean **WATCHERS** Koontz thriller with satanic overtones, not too heavy on the grue but having enough chilling moments to make it a worthy effort and should keep you guessing right up until its, almost clichéd, finale.

Paul J. Brown.



XTRO II: THE SECOND ENCOUNTER (1991)

First Independent.
Directed by Harry Bromley Davenport.
90 mins.

Deep inside a secret US government research establishment, three scientists are 'sent' to a parallel world as part of 'Project Nexus'.

Once on this 'world' contact, both audio and visual, is lost and panic sets in.

The only solution is to re-recruit Dr. Shepherd, whose past record with the Nexus Project is dodgy to say the least. A crack hit-team are also brought in in case of trouble.

Suddenly, one of the missing three returns, and after a short spell in intensive care gives 'birth' in true **ALIEN**-copycat chest-burst glory to a creature from the other side!

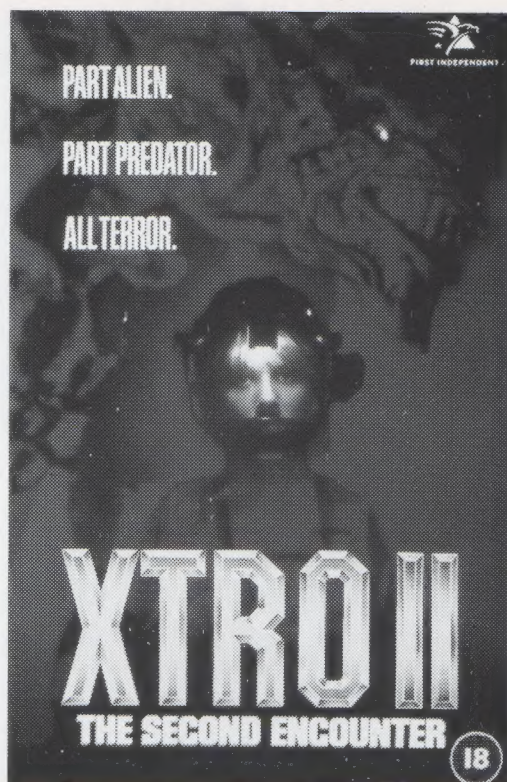
So, the scene is set for an all-out alien encounter within the rooms and many corridors of the complex and it's only a matter of time before the workforce starts dwindling in number as the creature hunts, mutilates and kills as it increases in size.

There is no way out of the of the building because the computer controlled system senses contamination inside and seals all the exits and warns that in just six hours it will 'cleanse' the entire place by flushing it out with a strong dose of radiation!

The military types take control of the situation and arm themselves with futuristic weaponry (very much like the big guns in **ALIENS**), split up and go on a bug-hunt of their own...

Yes, it is a huge **ALIEN/ALIENS** rip-off (there's even a Ripley-esque character complete with a vest!), but it is still quite an entertaining piece of science-fiction action in its own right with reasonable acting from all concerned, apart from Jan-Michael Vincent (as Shepherd) who seems to want to be in another production. Harry Bromley Davenport's direction is crisp and taut and he handles the suspense well. The special-effects are quite striking and several grisly scenes are depicted; however, although the full-size alien/xtro is quite convincing it lacks the sheer power, speed and visual impact of its Giger-fied cousin.

Trivia buffs may like to know that there is a massive continuity error: a close-up shot is shown of an unfortunate victim's head as the alien's claws are rammed through it (actually quite a stunning shot), the camera then cuts away and shows the poor guy falling to the floor with his head completely undamaged!



XTRO II video sleeve

Oh, and by the way, it bears no resemblance to the original **XTRO** gorefest from the early eighties, which was also from Harry Bromley Davenport!

Paul J. Brown.



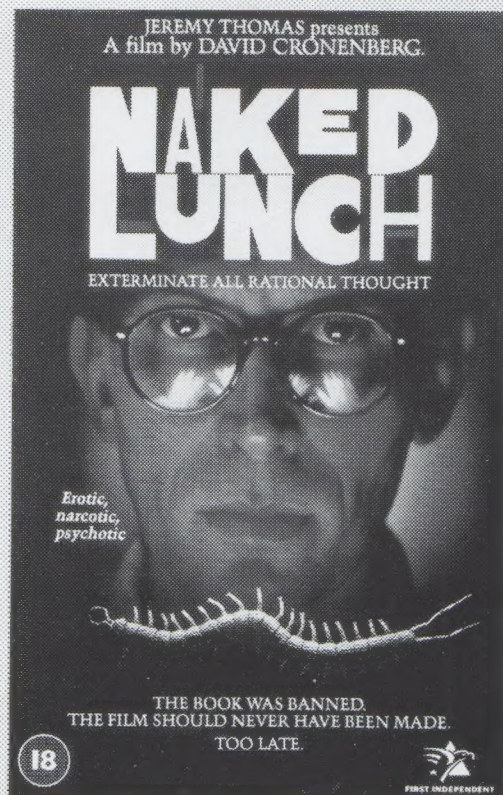
NAKED LUNCH COMPETITION

David Cronenberg's controversial film version of the banned William Burroughs book is now available on video. **FANTASYNOOPSIS**, in conjunction with those kind people at **FIRST INDEPENDENT**, offers you the chance to win a **NAKED LUNCH** VHS video, a copy of the book, and a rather nifty **NAKED LUNCH** cap.

Just answer this simple question to win:

WHAT YEAR WAS THE BURROUGHS BOOK FIRST PUBLISHED?

Send your answer along to the usual editorial address, including your own name and address, marking your envelope "LUNCH COMP". The closing date is 31st May 1993 and the first 3 correct answers drawn after that date will win. Good Luck!





Something wonderful has happened...

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